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S E R M O N S.

SERMONS

ON

THE LORD'S PRAYER;

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A SERMON ON SPIRITUAL WORSHIP.

BY

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LATE MINISTER OF LONG ACRE CHAPEL.

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SERMON I.

ON PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 9.

After this manner therefore pray ye.

THIS sermon is only introductory to a series of discourses which it is my intention, by the blessing of God, to preach from that interesting portion of Divine Writ commonly called the Lord's Prayer.

This prayer evinces itself, by its excellencies, to be from God. It has, evidently, its source in infinite Wisdom and infinite Love.

I. I shall consider, first, WHAT IS PRAYER?

If asked to define prayer, I should call it the ascent of the human heart to God—the ascent of the heart, with all its wants, with all its sins, with all its misery. We cannot be divested of any thing that is evil but in the bosom of our heavenly Father. It requires the power of Omnipotence, every moment, to deliver us from all evil and invest us with every good. May we know, then, individually, what it is thus to ascend to God!

The instruction for prayer is very short and com-

prehensive : “ Pour out your heart before him ” (Ps. † lxii. 8) : give it up with all its desires ; keep nothing back.

We find something analagous to prayer even in the brute creation. Every thing that possesses animal life seeks its welfare under what we call instinct ; which, though inexplicable to us, must be traced to † God as its source. From our acquaintance with the brute creation we know, that when they have once experienced the kindness of man, they never afterwards fail to look up to him for a repetition of it. † The individual who has once tasted that the Lord is gracious, will never look any where else for the satisfaction of the desires of his immortal spirit ; he will be conscious that finite being cannot afford any thing that has even a tendency to satisfy him. We were created, originally, to be satisfied with nothing short of God himself ; and prayer was intended, by the Almighty, to express our return to Him, and the consciousness of His all-sufficiency. Notwithstanding our imperfection and indeliberate, we are to approach Him, in prayer, assured of being heard by Him. No prayer was ever put up in simplicity and sincerity to God, without receiving an answer. How is this to be proved ? It sweetens the disposition and strengthens the mind. If we are not unjust to ourselves ; if we honour His word, we shall approach Him in prayer assured of being heard by Him. Nothing is more certain than that God hears and answers prayer. “ This is the confidence that we have in Him,” says the Apostle, “ that if we ask any

thing according to His will, He heareth us : and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him ” (1 John v. 14).

II. I proceed, in the second place, to consider THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF PRAYER.

1. *Public prayer.* God is eminently honoured by the public prayers of His saints ; for He “ loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob ” (Psal. lxxxvii. 2). The assembly of the family of heaven here upon earth, bears a greater resemblance than any thing else to the worship which God receives above. Indeed, it is a truism in the minds of those who have paid attention to their Bibles, that nothing can be more delightful to the Lord than the assembly of his saints ; and, as God is a God of order, it is very desirable that this should be carried on with the utmost reverence, and regularity. You are unjust to yourselves, and ungrateful to God, in coming late to His house of prayer. I mention this in the most respectful and affectionate manner ; for I should be unworthy of my sacred profession, and of the interesting and important trust committed to me, if I shrank from any duty that had a tendency to promote your welfare. Let me entreat you to exert every effort to assemble yourselves together at the commencement of the worship of God ; that we may begin and end together—that all our hearts may ascend *as one* into the presence of God ; and remember, that God hears your

†prayers not as individuals, but as a congregation. In all ages, the church of God has on various occasions met together ; begun at a stated hour, and ended at a certain period, unless the worship was more than usually prolonged by the effusion of the Divine Spirit. In the name of the Lord then, as well as for the welfare of your own souls, I invite you to be as early and regular as you possibly can in your attendance on public worship.

2. Prayer may be considered, secondly, in connexion with *family worship*.

As prayer involves an eminent part of the worship of the living God, one observation will apply here universally. Let it be carried on in such a manner as, if possible, to preserve the spirit of prayer, the genuine spirit of worship. And I recommend brevity. I think it much better, much wiser, so to engage in this duty as that children and servants may rise from service, saying, “how soon it is ended,” rather than by long chapters, long expositions, and lengthened prayers, to be sent from the room wearied and disgusted. It is painful indeed to see servants tired out with the work of the day, and wearied afterwards with worship unseasonably prolonged. One of the most eminent ministers I ever knew was never more than fifteen minutes in family worship. However, I do not wish to limit you to *minutes*, though I have the highest authority for recommending brevity. “When you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do : for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them :

for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him " (Matt. vi. 7, 8).

Most of the prayers in Scripture are very short, ⁺ and very comprehensive. The longest on record is that of Solomon at the consecration of the temple. But Solomon, in this prayer, was an eminent type of Jesus Christ, in His intercession in glory. The glory of the Lord filled the house, and Solomon was left alone addressing the King of kings.

3. I consider, thirdly, prayer *in the closet*. We find that the saints of old had their stated periods, their regular hours, for waiting on God in secret. Let these periods be fixed, and *so* fixed as to expose you to the least interruption possible. The first thing in the morning certainly, and the last at night. We read of holy Daniel, that he was in the habit of calling on God three times a day. When the day of trial arrived, he opened his windows and prayed *as usual*, looking towards the temple, the type of the Saviour : the holy man of God did not seem to be ruffled in the least degree ; all was calmness and composure ; proving that he had been in the daily habit of flying constantly from earth to heaven, to the bosom of his Father and his God. The individual who is intimately conversant with God, cannot hear *evil* tidings from any quarter.

4. I would just allude to *mental prayer*. It is desirable, above all things, that the human heart, under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, should be ever kept in a praying frame : " Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching

thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints" (Eph. vi. 18). This spirit does not, in the least degree, militate against cheerfulness, provided that cheerfulness be perfectly innocent. Let nothing be indulged in, for a single second of time, that we should be ashamed of in the presence of the living God.

As involved in this, I would consider, *holy ejaculations*—prayers that frequently dart from earth to heaven, unknown to Satan himself, bringing back an answer that shields the petitioner from the attacks of the arch-enemy, and renders him triumphant in the hour of trial.

III. In the third place, let me call your attention to THE BEING ADDRESSED IN PRAYER.

1. Negatively considered, the Object is, no image. According to the express command of God, all images that resemble any thing in heaven, on earth, or in the waters under the earth, are forbidden. Roman Catholics tell us they do not adore images, as such; but merely use them to fix the attention and remind them of that which they symbolize. Let it be admitted that they are used with this view. I only ask, can any excuse whatever be available for violating the express command of God? Besides, there is a folly in it, in this respect, that nothing presented to our senses can give us any idea of the Saviour's exaltation and intercession. It is calculated only to mislead.

2. Saints and angels are not to be invoked. If

they could hear us, they could not help us. The absurdity of such worship is only equalled by its sin. God, and God *alone*, is the object of worship, whether we consider the Divine perfections, or our individual wants.

1. Because He is *omnipresent*. “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.” He is with us and in us perpetually; for “in Him we live and move and have our being.”

2. Necessarily connected with the omnipresence, is, the *omniscience* of Deity. Deity alone is to be addressed in prayer, because He alone sees the inmost recesses of the human heart, and knows all our wants before we give them expression in words. Hence Solomon, in his intercession for the Jewish people, thus expresses himself: “What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands towards this house; then hear Thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest: for *Thou*, even *Thou only*, knowest the hearts of all the children of men” (1 Kings viii. 38, 39).

3. God alone is to be addressed in prayer because He is *omnipotent*. He alone is able to answer our

prayer, and confer upon us every blessing we need. We must receive every thing that is necessary to make us truly happy, immediately from Him.

God has appointed the necessary means, and He will ever crown the diligent use of them with His own blessing.

4. Prayer is an act of worship due to God, and to God only. If *prayer* be given to images, then every thing else ought to be presented likewise. Awful inconsistency and folly! Worship is due to God alone; and he who refuses it will for ever rue the consequences.

IV. I consider, in the fourth place, the name of HIM IN WHOM WE ARE TO APPROACH GOD—JESUS CHRIST; in his person, and in all the glory of his work: for this obvious reason, merit is exclusively His own. No finite being has ever merited, or can ever merit, any thing at the hands of God; no, not even the highest intelligence in heaven: hence the necessity of a Divine Person, not only to atone for sin; but to be our Saviour, our Intercessor, our Judge in the last day, and our Preserver for ever and ever.

The Saviour tells his disciples, that whatsoever they ask in *His name*, shall be given them. Nothing can give us a higher idea of His glory, or of the prevalence of His intercession. All things are His; his family are His; and all blessings are His. His family are His essentially, and His by purchase. “In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily”

(Coloss. ii. 9). “ For it pleased the Father, that in Him should all fulness dwell ” (Coloss. i. 19). “ Of His fulness have all we received ” (John i. 16). All our temporal, as well as spiritual blessings, emanate from Him. The bread we eat, and the water we drink, are the purchase of His infinitely precious blood. He gives us our daily bread, as a covenant blessing ; and, were we truly wise ; all we think, say, or do, would involve an act of worship to God, for such a Saviour, and for the gifts of such blessings in Him.

V. In prayer we are to SEEK THE INFLUENCES OF GOD THE HOLY GHOST.

Without Him we can do nothing : and if acquainted with our own hearts, the experience of each must echo this declaration. We know not even for what to ask, and we know not the spirit in which it ought to be asked, without the ceaseless influences of God the Holy Ghost. God has often wounded the feelings of nature, that men might be induced to approach Him in prayer ; and the simple cry of distressed nature has often issued in the gracious communication of holy and spiritual gifts. Such individuals have afterwards discovered that in their first approach to God, they were utterly destitute of the least particle of spirituality : but misery pressed heavily upon them, while eternal destruction opened beneath their feet ; distressed nature burst forth in prayer ; and while that prayer only involved a consideration of themselves, God answered it in a way infinitely worthy of Himself, by pouring out upon

the petitioners His most glorious gift, even His Holy Spirit ; a blessing then unknown and unsought.

Prayer is likewise to be made for all men. We are members of a community ; and we are to remember this in our prayers ; the Apostle insists upon it in his Epistle to Timothy (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2). Moreover we have neighbours, by comparing whose lives with the declaration of God's word we must be aware that they are in a state of condemnation before Him. It is God's express command that His church should pray for all men.

VI. Lastly, consider THE MANY OBLIGATIONS WE ARE UNDER TO PRAY TO GOD.

1. It is the *command* of God. And from the command alone we might have inferred that He would answer prayer. The Saviour says, "That men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke xviii. 1). The Apostle Paul exhorts us to "pray without ceasing ;" and we cannot possibly violate any of these commands without being unjust to ourselves, and without being guilty of rebellion against the King of kings.

2. The *promises* of God. These impose on us another obligation to pray to Him ; and they were intended to encourage us to do so. "Call upon me in the day of trouble ; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (Ps. l. 15 ; Isa. lviii. 9 ; Zech. xiii. 9 ; Matt. vii. 7). And many others might be quoted, did time suffice.

3. Another reason applicable to the believer is,

that *God has given to us the Spirit of adoption.*—The gift of the Holy Spirit involves in it new obligations, *as well as the delights peculiar to itself.* “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father” (Gal. iv. 6). But it may be asked, How am I to know that I address God, that I wait upon Him, and look up to him as my Father? Take one infallible evidence. The individual who knows that God is his Father, can no more live without prayer than he can exist without his daily food. Hunger and thirst, if we neglect our frail frames, would compel us to seek supplies: so hunger and thirst after righteousness oblige the child of God to wait on his heavenly Father. Real prayer is the breath of the soul—it is the language of God within us—the address of one Divine Person to another: and surely this ought to render the exercise most eminently interesting to us; while it should teach us to deprecate the idea of doing any thing except under the influence of the living God.

4. Consider *the wisdom of prayer.* The chief blessing is primarily and perpetually kept in view, Spirituality! The things of time and sense occupy, invariably, the second place in the heart of him who is born of God: and the consciousness of this is a striking evidence of being interested in the covenant of Christ, and consequently in all the blessings comprised in it. “Covet the best gifts,” and they are the renovating influences of the Holy Spirit. It is to encourage us to wait upon God that the promise

is given : “ Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ ” (Phil. i. 6). The certainty of the possession of the prize affords the strongest encouragement to the believer to persevere in spite of all intervening obstacles. Some presume to say that this doctrine tends to licentiousness ; I ask, who is the best judge of truth, and the effects of truth—God or man ? “ I will hear what God the Lord will speak ; for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints ; but let them not turn again to folly ” (Ps. lxxxv. 8).

Learn a few lessons.

1. That prayerless individuals and prayerless families are, in Scripture, marked and denounced in the most awful manner. “ Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not—and upon the families that call not upon thy name ” (Jer. x. 25). Are there any of you living without prayer ? I address you as families and as individuals. God and man are against you ! God and his Christ and his Church are against you—oh think of these things.

2. Remember that the prayer of the believer involves in it a blessing to himself, as well as to others. He cannot pray as he ought to pray, without a blessing from God. Prayer for others is one striking proof that we pray rightly for ourselves. “ The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much ” (James v. 16).

3. And lastly. Consider the high destiny of

prayer. It is to lose itself for ever in praise. The principle will live in heaven, but prayer will be lost in praise: persevere in prayer then, pray as long as you live. Ask God for spiritual blessings and have no taste to choose any thing earthly for yourselves: remembering this—that the voice of prayer ascending from earth to heaven, has in it more music in the ears of God, than all the songs of the angelic hosts.

SERMON II.

ON PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 9.

After this manner therefore pray ye.

WE are at a loss, when we peruse the volume of Inspiration, which to admire most; the goodness or the wisdom of God. They both shine in infinite glory; giving us instruction in every manner in which it can possibly reach us.

Some teachers are celebrated for communicating instruction in one way, and some in another; but our Saviour communicates it in every possible manner; while each that he adopts presents us with perfection.

God himself indited a prayer for His family in the Old Testament; the Saviour has indited a prayer in the New Testament. Infinite Goodness and infinite Wisdom compassionate our weakness and ignorance in teaching us how to approach God. Individuals sometimes tell us, "I know not how to pray, I know not how to express myself in prayer." To this, I answer, God teaches you how to pray, and what to say to Him in prayer.

I. In the first place, let me direct your attention to THE PRAYER WHICH WILL BE HEARD BY GOD—the prayer which He has promised to hear.

1. The *prayer of faith* will certainly be heard. Faith not only believes in the infinite power of God; but, at the same time, in His infinite willingness to hear those who pray. The prayer of faith may sometimes mistake its object; but when it does, God gives an answer, though it may not be what has been asked. God sometimes says “No;” but when He does, he gives something far better than the request. The Saviour tells his disciples, “All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matt. xxi. 22). Now the believer asks, Who is the Saviour? Faith immediately fixes its eye on the dignity of his person, and the worth of his sacrifice; the person and the sacrifice of God! and the believer knows that he must prevail.

2. God will have *the whole man engaged in prayer*: and this is the honest desire of every true believer. God, in the Old Testament, addressing his family, thus speaks to them: “Ye shall seek me and find me, when you shall search for me with *all your heart*” (Jer. xxix. 13). There is no being worthy of the whole heart, but God. Man weak and limited as his faculties are, yet, if we take him in his full dimensions, finds no one capable of comprising him, in all his wants, but God. The individual who has been disciplined by the Holy Spirit to know himself as a sinner; Christ as a Saviour; the Holy Spirit as a Sanctifier; and the God and

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as his God and Father; will seek Him with the whole heart.

Many individuals are afraid to pray, because they feel a great deal of selfishness in their prayers. God intended selfishness to be in our prayers. The individual who knows his own wants, will take himself to a Throne of Grace—he is infinitely welcome. God intends, without exception, that in the whole circle of worship we should invariably seek our own interest. Obedience to God involves the welfare of the creature, and will do so for ever. Seek the blessings God intended that you should possess. Let your prayer be that you may possess them *all*; they are absolutely necessary to renovate the human heart, that it may be brought to, and preserved in, a state of spotless purity for ever and ever. May this be the language of every heart, unworthy as it is in itself; “No one is worthy of my heart—no one is capable of receiving it, but God.” Finite being cannot receive the whole of man. Give yourselves then wholly to God. Leviathan must have his native element. God is the element of his family; they cannot live but in Him. Let Him have the heart, then, as well as the head; not the intellect only, but the affections; indeed He cannot possess the one without the other. O God, take full possession of us individually!

3. The *prayer of humility* will invariably be heard. “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble” (James iv. 6). The humble exalt God, while they feel that they cannot abase themselves too much. My opinion is, that saints and angels in

heaven are not as humble as they would wish to be; while each is anxious to be lower than the other. Where this principle lives, it must be heaven. The individual who is humble proves, in the exercise of his humility, that the mighty hand of God is upon him. Man is such a monster in pride, that no one but God can bring him down. The aggregate of finite Being cannot do it. All the woes of time, all the miseries of eternity cannot do it. The prayer of God's family ascends from the *dust*; *they* no longer usurp the throne of Deity; no longer attempt to rob Him of his crown; but sink into nothing before Him, aye into less than nothing! Pure beings, who have never violated the holy law of God, are *nothing* before Him: they who have transgressed His holy law are *less* than nothing; as, in a pecuniary point of view, one who is in debt, and has no money, is worth less than nothing. Pure beings above have nothing of their own but imperfection; and imperfection will ever be predicable of finite Being. O may God of His infinite goodness and mercy, teach us to know that we are sinners, and give us to view His glory in the redemption and salvation of fallen man. May we be individually led to Calvary, to behold the Saviour dying, the Just for the unjust; and we shall be, *of necessity*, humbled in the dust, while our destiny is to be eternally exalted!

4. The prayer of industry and diligence will be heard. We ought not to allow ourselves in idleness or slothfulness. It is a disgrace to a man to be idle and slothful even in earthly concerns. Industry and

diligence become man in every thing wherein he is lawfully engaged ; above all, in his intercourse with Heaven. "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing ; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." (Prov. xiii. 4.) In the name of all the Divine perfections, in the name of every lovely principle that can inhabit the human bosom, I conjure you to be frequent and fervent at the Throne of Grace !

5. The *prayer of honesty* will be heard by God. By honesty, I mean a desire to forsake all sin, without one single exception ; and a desire to possess every good which God has provided for man in His holy covenant. These things are absolutely necessary to constitute spiritual honesty. The Apostle James says to some, "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask *amiss*, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James iv. 3). They exclude God from their prayers ; their prayers are filled with *exclusive selfishness*, and an answer to such prayers would be a dishonour to God, and no benefit, but rather a curse to them.

May we search ourselves individually, in the presence of the living God. I do not ask you what bitter conflicts you may have had within your bosoms ; but I do ask you, in the name of the God of heaven and earth, is it, in the midst of all, your desire to abandon every thing that is contrary to His will, and to seek every thing in conformity with it ?

The Jews of old seem to have understood this, the spiritual Jews especially. Read the ixth chapter

of John, and attend to that excellent Divine, the blind man who had been restored : the Pharisees say, “ We know that God spake unto Moses ; as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is ” (ver. 29, &c.) The man answered and said unto them, “ Why herein is a *marvellous thing*, that *ye* know not from whence he is, and yet *he hath opened mine eyes*.” No one could reason better : “ Now we know that God heareth not sinners,” (that is, those who go on in a wilful course of iniquity ; there is a distinction to be made between the individual who only draws nigh to God with his mouth while his heart is engaged with idols, and another who approaches Him fighting against his sins,) “ but if any man be a worshipper of God and doeth His will, him He heareth.” “ Since the world began it was not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.” “ If this man were *not of God*, he could do nothing.” Admirable ! This individual seems to have understood well, what spiritual integrity was. He seems to have felt what was the nature of that prayer which would be heard of God.

6. The *prayer of filial fear* is invariably heard by God. One reason why the Spirit of adoption is conferred by God, is, that it may be a Spirit of grace and supplication. The children of Israel are represented in Scripture, as coming to God with “ weeping and supplications ” (Jer. xxxi. 9), the genuine spirit of a child.

The Lord, in describing what this fear is, tells us

that he “taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy” (Ps. cxlvii. 11). Let this hope be as *weak* as it may, so it be but *real*, the prayer will ascend to heaven.

Let it be remembered in all I have said, that I am contending for the *reality*, not for the strength of the reality. Nor am I contending for principles *exclusively*; I mean, principles that have no enemies to contend with. God hears the lisping voice of infancy, as well as the voice of manhood in the day of grace. He despiseth not the day of small things. He knows that there are many enemies within the human heart; and the man who is honestly desirous of being delivered from them will be heard by God: “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Ephes. vi. 18).

II. But as unbelief is strong within the human bosom; stronger than we are aware of; it is necessary to prove that GOD HEARS AND ANSWERS PRAYER.

1. And first, The *mercy* of God proves this; the mercy of God excludes no prayer of misery on this side hell. Exclusion is the sinner’s work. Many desire to know the secret purposes of God before they can open their lips in prayer: this is presumption. It is enough to know that His mercy is infinite, and that we are individually welcome to Him. “The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting” (Ps. ciii. 17). “He will regard the prayer

of the destitute, and not despise their prayer" (Ps. cii. 17). "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy" (Ps. ciii. 8).

2. The *faithfulness* of God proves the same truth; and indeed I could show how all the Divine perfections prove the same thing, for each is as glorious as the other in the redemption and salvation of fallen man. "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins He is *faithful* and *just* to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9). We sometimes fear His justice, while we court His mercy. God is not honoured by this. No: unless I were assured that justice is as much the sinner's friend as mercy, I should never have courage to approach God.

3. The *intercession of Jesus Christ* proves it. And, here, all the Divine perfections present themselves to the Father in the person of the Son. Infinity demanding justice to *itself* in interceding for sinners. The Apostle Paul seems to have been alive to this truth, and makes a wise and holy use of it: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore *come boldly* unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need" (Heb. iv. 14—16).

Messiah is above. He is interceding for his family—for every individual, and for every grace.

4. Another reason necessarily and intimately connected with this to which I have just alluded is, that *the Spirit of the Father and the Son is a Spirit of grace and supplication within our bosoms*. With this Divine Spirit in our hearts, what enemy can possibly prevail against us? Not one: they are all destined to fall, and we to be more than conquerors, through him that loved us and washed us in his blood.

III. I have said, that instruction is presented to us in every possible manner in the Book of God. We have, particularly, the examples of others; and we never can be sufficiently grateful to the God of all mercy and grace for them. We like to see a thing exemplified. The *description* of a machine is not enough for an inquisitive individual: he should see the machine itself, and at work too, if possible, to have a correct idea of the ingenuity of the inventor, and the success of the invention. Those whose histories are recorded in Scripture were like ourselves; they had the same enemies to contend with; they were placed just as we are; and yet they have triumphed. Their histories are given to encourage us to approach God at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances.

A sick man, sometimes, will hardly hear of a Physician being called in. No persuasion, no entreaty will avail; he will not suffer him to be sent for. At

last a friend comes in and tells him, "I was much worse than you are, and the physician has cured me." This gives the sick man confidence; he puts himself under his care, and soon experiences the good effects. He is restored to perfect health. I view the examples of Scripture in this light.

The simplicity of the saints of old was such, that they seemed to set about nothing without first consulting God. If truly wise, we shall be like them.

1. The first example to which I refer you, is, the conduct of *Abraham's servant*, when he was instructed to go and search out a wife for Isaac" (Gen. xxiv. 7). He begins, like a truly wise and pious servant, with prayer to God. And if any of you, my young friends, desire a wife, (and now remember what I say is not to excite a laugh,) seek her of the Lord first of all. If you are truly wise, you will trust yourselves in nothing; but seek daily prudence, as a daily blessing, at the hands of God, that you may not disgrace your profession. Imitate Abraham's servant.

2. The *example of Jacob* when he dreaded Esau's wrath, as we read in the thirty-second of Genesis, where we also read of his wrestling with the Angel. He would not be silenced even by the Angel of the Covenant. He persevered till he was in possession of the blessing; and Esau was immediately pacified. Make God your friend, and you may rest assured you will have nothing to fear from any enemy. "When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

3. The *prayer of Hannah*. Imitate her, ye mothers! “O Lord of Hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but will give unto thine handmaid a man-child; then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life” (1 Sam. i. 1). Here is a mother! O give your children to the Lord! She prayed for him before he was born; before he was called into existence she gave him to the Lord. The grace of God certainly took possession of the heart of Samuel when very young. Many parents wish to have children to take possession of their estates, to sustain (what they call) the dignity of their houses. Hannah ascends above them all; *she* wished to have a child, only that she might give him to the Lord.

4. Remember the *prayer of Jabez*: “And Jabez, called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coasts, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me. And God granted him that which he requested” (1 Chron. iv. 10).

5. Read the *prayers of the children of Israel*, which again and again averted the judgments of God. “When they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found of them” (2 Chron. xv. 4).

6. Read the *prayer of David in the cave* (Psal. cxlii.); of Elisha among his enemies, and how the Lord answered him (2 Kings vi. 15); of Jeremiah in prison,

and in the midst of troubles (Jer. xxxii.) ; of Daniel cast into the den of lions (Dan. ix.), from which the Lord delivered him. But some one may be disposed to say, (and it is the duty of the ministers of the Gospel to meet all cases,) This is not my case ; I have involved myself in difficulties by my own sin ; what is the use of my prayer ? My brother, my sister, I have the authority of Scripture to invite you to pray. Read the history of Jonah, who, though armed with rebellion and perverseness ; when in the midst of his distress, after he had brought the calamity upon himself ; prayed unto the Lord ; and the Lord delivered him. “ Out of the belly of hell cried I,” said Jonah (Jon. ii). It is impossible to conceive more awful circumstances than those in which he was placed ; no one was ever circumstanced as he was ; yet desperate as was his case, he cried and the Lord heard and delivered him. These things are written to give us every possible encouragement to approach the Lord.

IV. Lastly, to consider, the RULE OF PRAYER. Let all the prayers we find in Scripture, that have been preferred to God and answered by Him, be our patterns. With these in our hands, we shall never be at a loss for words ; we may be at a loss to make a shew of ourselves at prayer, and a very good loss it will be ; but we shall never be at a loss to pray to God.

All the prayers recorded in Scripture as indited by the Spirit of the living God, indicative of our wants, and of His readiness to supply them, are so excellent as to be without the least alloy of imper-

fection: nevertheless none of them are to be compared as a whole and as a model with the Lord's Prayer.

"After this manner," said our Lord, "pray ye," and then proceeds: "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name ; thy kingdom come ; thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven : give us this day our daily bread ; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors : and lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil : for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

Consider this prayer as a model or pattern, and as a form. As a model, that you may pray for the same blessings, though in different words : and besides this I would recommend the use of it as a form. Some Dissenters constantly reject it as a form, doubtless to their own injury. I once asked a dissenting friend why he did not use the Lord's Prayer. Because, he said, it did not seem to be presented in the Lord's own name. But is not this groundless ? Was there, I ask, any prayer ever acceptably presented to God but in his name, from the first prayer when true religion appeared in Eden to the present day ? But our Lord in an especial manner places himself at the head of this prayer : "Our Father." He is, as I have often observed, the first of worshippers, as well as the first of kings. He is worshipped as a King while interceding for his people : and his own humanity worships God, while he intercedes for us in all his glory ; as a Divine Person demanding, in justice at the hands of the Father, what is in mercy to be imparted to us.

The words of this prayer are very few, and its matter very comprehensive. It comprises God in all His glory, and the sinner in all his shame. It contains all that we want ; and in effect all that God wishes to hear from our lips. If there were nothing else in the Bible expressive of the dignity of the Saviour's person, of the glory of his work, and of the infinite benevolence of his disposition, this prayer alone would be sufficient. It evidently proves itself to have emanated from the bosom of infinite Wisdom and infinite Love ; from the bosom of One who knew man to perfection, because He knew God to perfection ! Model your prayers by this prayer ; and may God of His goodness and mercy write it in all our hearts.

But there may be some whose cases I have not yet reached ; let them attend, while I address them in the application of my sermon.

Sickness may derange the human frame very much ; it may reduce it to such a state that it is hardly capable of communion with the Lord, unless in a very eminent degree under the influence of the Holy Spirit. We should attend to this. Some have ascribed to their own wilful acts what only proceeds from bodily disease. Let it be remembered ; they are the Lord's still, invariably in his bosom, though not always conscious of it. In this state of mind they are frequently made the objects of Satan's attacks and temptations. Remember, it is your privilege as well as duty, though perhaps in the midst of much suffering, to be looking up to God for deliverance ; and

that in His own time and in His own way, he will appear in your hearts individually.

Sometimes internal and external trials stupify the soul, and the individual thinks that God is about to destroy him. Listen not to such a suggestion. At all times, in all places, under all circumstances, pray to God. Pray when you cannot pray !

Another case is—the insensibility of the human heart, and a rebelliousness of spirit quarrelling with God, in all His dispensations. *These* are some of the severe things His people suffer ; and they are tempted, perhaps, at times to say, I am a hypocrite in grace ; would you pray then ?—Yes. The prayer of faith is destined to penetrate the thickest cloud, and eventually to dispel it.

Lastly. Let it be remembered, that God is infinitely worthy of being addressed at all times. Even when we are not at all convinced of our own sincerity. *I dare not wait till I am convinced of it.* Perhaps some of you will think of this. Let your circumstances be what they may, never be silent before God. You “have not a good heart”—God can give you one. But, “you have nothing but sin”—The dead in trespasses and sins are those whom God quickens. But “you have insulted God again and again”—That is the reason why you ought to seek His pardon. But some one may say, “My heart is as hard as adamant”—God can soften it. Be determined to lay siege to the Throne of Heaven ; and never be silent till your prayers are heard and answered.

SERMON III.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 9.

Our Father, which art in Heaven.

God is the Parent of the universe. He is not only the Author but the Preserver of every thing that is good ; the Author and Preserver of good exclusively ; overruling evil, indeed, for the best and wisest of purposes, as will be evident in a very short time ; annihilating evil, in the bosoms of His friends, and punishing it in His enemies, for ever. But He is the Parent of His human family in the highest sense. The relationship subsisting between God and His Church, in Christ, involves in it all His glory. All her members are naturally His enemies ; but He has purposed, from eternity, to make them not only His friends but His family. This is the end God had in view when He sent His Son into the world in our nature. This is the reason why Christ suffered, died, rose again, and now intercedes for man at the throne of God.

Angels are the children of God by creation ; but we are His children in every sense in which we pos-

sibly can be. The Saviour is essentially the Son of God, and He became human. Humanity in Him was made Divine. The Son of God became the Son of Man, that the sons of men might be made the sons of God.

I. The first thing to be considered is this ENDEARING RELATIONSHIP, “*Our Father.*”

We are blessed with it in and through Jesus Christ. “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John i. 1—13). The sovereign pleasure of Jehovah, and nothing inferior to this, called them into a new state of existence; and blessed them with a spirit of adoption, in their regeneration and justification.

They are commanded here to address God as a Father, for this plain reason; that the relationship in all its glory is destined to pervade their worship for ever. There will be some glorious peculiarities involved in the worship of saints that will not be involved in that of angels.

1. They are to address God as their Father, to *encourage them* in the midst of all weakness and distress. What child dreads the presence of a Father of whose love he is well assured; of one to whom he is indebted for all? It is in intimacy with, and by the experience of the affections of a Father, that

a child knows him *to be* his Father. So, it is in intimacy with, and by our experience of, the *love* of our Heavenly Father, that we are taught to know Him as such. The relationship to God, as a Father, cannot be known by any one, but in the relationship of a child: it must be known *in itself*; it cannot be known by any thing extraneous to itself. I may tell my hearers of the relationship subsisting between God and His family in His Son Jesus Christ; but they can never enter into its blessings without being conscious that they are themselves the sons of God. Seek, then, the blessing: it is open to every one that hears the Gospel. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" (Ps. ciii. 13). Let us not imagine that because Deity is infinitely too perfect to admit of the ebb and flow of feeling, (such I mean as we experience in our own bosoms,) that we are not to pay the utmost attention to this interesting truth. Sympathy and love, properly speaking, inhabit in the highest degree the bosom of Essential Deity; while, let it ever be remembered, that all correct feelings, wherever found, whether in the bosoms of men or angels, are only emanations from Deity; they are from the bosom of the Infinite and Eternal One; though, in comparison with their parental source, they are infinitely less than a particle of light to the body of the sun. All the exquisite feelings of sympathy and love that inhabited the bosom of the humanity of Jesus Christ, inhabit the bosom of Deity; and to Deity they must be traced. What is to be traced to an opposite

source? All insensibility; all corrupt, all exclusively selfish feeling. Finite beings have nothing in themselves but imperfection.

Be encouraged, then, to wait on God, as a Father, and seek the simplicity of a child to receive His truth. Metaphysical science abused, is highly injurious to the best interests of man. Whatever difficulties may occur, let the truth I have been dwelling upon occupy the heart. I have proved that it must be so; if otherwise, no lovely feelings would ever inhabit any being. No excellence, of any kind, can exist in the creature which does not come from God; and none can come from God, which does not primarily inhabit Himself. The glorious feelings of the Saviour's humanity are to be traced to this; the Divine perfection dwelling in His humanity.

2. We are commanded by the Saviour, in the second place, to address God as Our Father; to teach us, *filial reverence* as well as *filial affection*. Love and reverence meet together, in the highest degree, in the worship of God in heaven; and they must be involved in the worship of God on earth. A son must honour the father he loves. Wherever filial affection is found, it invariably involves reverence as well as love. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him" (Ps. lxxxix. 7). God will be revered as well as loved; indeed, He cannot be loved without being revered.

3. We are commanded to address God as Our

Father, in the third place, to teach us to persevere till we prevail. It is a certain fact, that He has provided every good for His people; and it is therefore true, that they must be invested with every good. Instead of opposing the purposes of God to our prayers, as many foolishly do, we ought to make a wise use of His purposes to encourage us to pray. He has purposed to give us every good; and He x has commanded us to pray for every good of which we stand in need. "Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Ps. xxxvii. 4). It is not often that we err in our desire, when our hearts are right; and we know perfectly well, the persevering affection and wisdom with which children ask gifts of their parents: they know that they have the most tender string to touch, and that they *must* prevail. To encourage you to wait on God at a throne of grace, I need not, I trust, remind you of the tenderness and sympathy of our heavenly Father.

The Saviour does not command his family to + pray "Father, which art in heaven;" or individually "My Father;" but "*Our* Father," to teach us this important lesson, that *He is himself included*. Their prayers ascend to God in him, and are answered by God through him. "Our Father" necessarily involves, in another point of view, the relationship of Christ as a Brother, the head and representative of his family. "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God;" "*our Father, &c.*"

How is it that any can say they do not find

Christ in this prayer? It is full of him, from first to last; as full as he himself could make it. He commands them to pray; and he says, "My family, My brother, I will lead you by the hand into the presence of the God of heaven. Do not be afraid; your elder Brother is with you: say, with me, *Our* Father: I take the lead in every petition you present." Oh, may we ever feel this! It will be time enough for us to give over praying to God when we can ascertain that Jesus Christ has ceased to intercede for us; then, and not till then, ought we to cease to pray. But 'difficulties and obstacles multiply themselves continually'—Multiply your prayers in exact proportion.

X 4. He commands us to address God as our Father, in the fourth place, to *remind us that we are one family*; and that we ought to pray for one another. That individual who prays only for himself, has never prayed aright. The spirit of prayer is very comprehensive; it is a spirit of love; it pervades the bosoms of all the family of God, without a single exception. Mistake me not. I am aware that sometimes, in the midst of doubts and distress, the believer may think he has no object in view but himself: nevertheless, principle may be strongly retained in his bosom, when he himself is incapable of perusing all its workings. A man may be so severely exercised for a season as not to think even of his wife, or his children; but would any one infer from this, that an affectionate husband can ever be so placed as not to have the welfare of his wife and children at

heart? "Brethren, pray for us," says the Apostle; and the saints of old frequently prayed for each other. Solomon prayed for the whole family of God; and in so doing he was a type of Messiah, in His intercession.—Pray likewise *with* each other; God intended that His family should pray both with and for each other. They are His jewels: sun, moon, and stars are trifles in His eyes compared with them; kings and empires are put aside as little things, when He in His providence sees fit to exalt His church (as exalt her He will, in spite of all the efforts of her enemies to the contrary). God Himself, when seeking for His jewels, is like the woman mentioned in Scripture, looking for her piece of lost silver: and be assured, my brethren, that He will never lose one of them. As, then, God is our Father, and Christ is our Brother, let us not despair; let us pray to Him in the midst of all difficulties, national and individual. "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together" (Ps. xxxiv. 3).

What is the church militant engaged in at the present moment? Each member is as fully interested in a brother's welfare as in his own. "Love thy neighbour as thyself." The perfection of the Law requires this; and it is the glory of the Gospel that it invests man with the perfection of the Law. "*Our Father.*" The Saviour teaches us to love each other. It was intended that every principle of bitterness should be excluded; that we should all love as brethren; that offences should be mutually forgiven. A root of bitterness springing up in the human

heart, is fatal. Churches have been undermined ; by what ? By bitterness of spirit ! Had drunkenness and scandal appeared, the evil would have been exposed and eradicated ; but this bitterness of spirit has sometimes been suffered to live, till it has destroyed them, and scattered those who have been in the habit of worshipping God together as one family ; so scattered them that we must despair of ever seeing them united again, till God Himself, their own Father, in all the tenderness of his love shall collect them together around His throne in glory. Cherish no bitterness of spirit towards any one, whatever evils you may experience at his hands. You would do this, if truly wise, from a principle of selfishness. “Sirs, ye are brethren” (Acts. vii. 26), said Moses to the two Hebrews as they strove together : “why do ye wrong one to another ?” God would have His family love each other. If we loved one another as we ought to do, we should be indeed invincible.

II. “*Which art in heaven.*” I would consider, secondly, His family mansion, and our PATERNAL INHERITANCE.

Our Saviour, addressing himself to His disciples, says, “In my Father’s house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you ; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John xiv. 2, 3). At home ! in their Father’s house, and with their elder Brother ! In heaven

God manifests the glory of His love in a peculiar manner. In heaven, and in heaven only, God dispenses *all* His blessings. We are, at present, incapable of receiving them all; but we are destined to receive them when we arrive at our Father's house above. Children at school are not in the enjoyment of all the luxuries and delights of home; they must go to their Father's residence, ere they have all they wish for; and, which is sweeter than all besides, the full enjoyment of their parent's love.

“Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool” (Isa. lxvi. 1). By heaven is meant some place (where it may be I know not, and it is wise to check vain curiosity); but it is where God chooses to manifest all His love to all His family. It is of little importance whether it be near this earth, or millions of miles distant. If God pleased, He could transport me there in a second of time. Space is nothing to Him who is omnipresent. “Behold the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Him” (1 Kings viii. 27). If He willed it, I might be the next moment in the most distant regions of the earth. Whenever I bid adieu to this tabernacle of flesh, I shall be with Him, and see Him as He is. But, though God is peculiarly present in heaven, yet He is present every where. And we have the promise, that wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, our Father and our Brother are present in the midst of us, to hear and to bless us.

“Our Father which art in heaven.” 1. To teach

+ us the infinite exaltation of God ; that He can do what He pleases in all the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth ; that God is infinitely exalted above all finite being, and beyond any idea that can ever enter into our minds. “ I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods : whatsoever the Lord pleased that did He in heaven and in earth, in the sea, and in all deep places ” (Ps. cxxxv. 5, 6).

2. Another reason why the Saviour teaches His followers to address the Father in this manner is, to remind them that they are only strangers and pilgrims here on earth ; and in consequence of this, that they should be perpetually engaged in preparing for heaven. When we are about to visit friends at a distance ; friends, whom we love and respect ; it is our desire to appear with becoming decorum and affection ; in such a manner as that we may impart as well as receive pleasure. Need I remind you of the joy that it will give to God Himself to see His family with Him ? Though He is an immutable being, it will give Him exquisite pleasure to see His family safe in heaven. “ The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty ; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy ; He will rest in his love ; He will joy over thee with singing ” (Zeph. iii. 17). And of the Saviour it is said, “ He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied ” (Isa. liii. 11), when the bodies as well as the souls of the redeemed shall be ushered into the presence of the Lord in glory. “ Willing rather to be absent from

the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 6, 8). It is better to depart and be with Christ says the Apostle, to remind us that in a very short time we shall receive a rich welcome to our Father's courts above. We ought not, like naughty children, to play the truant as we are going home. No, we are pilgrims and strangers here on earth, seeking better things.

When Abraham set out on his journey at the command of God, to offer up his son Isaac, he knew not whither he was going ; but he was well aware that he was on his road to heaven at the command, and under the guidance of God. In like manner, we should always live as those who are travelling to heaven. Our walk and conversation would be widely different from what they are, if our minds were deeply impressed with this truth. Of the family of Heaven, and journeying thither, we should declare plainly that we seek a country.

From what I have said, learn a few lessons : and remember that we must all learn, again and again, the same lessons ; indeed, we should be ever learning, and that too, under the discipline of the Holy Spirit. God is truth ; and the Spirit of truth is given to guide His family here with His counsel, that they may afterwards be received into glory.

1. Learn then, first, the *Love of God*.

It appears in His covenant ; in the gift of His Son ; in the sacrifice of Messiah ; in every gift to us ; the same love pervades all things connected with re-

ligion. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John iii. 1, 2). The contrast between one state and another is no where so striking as between the family of God; first of all, in their natural state, and afterwards in their heavenly state, when ushered into the presence of God to receive all the blessings He has prepared for them.

2. Learn, secondly, to *honour your heavenly Father in all things*.—Ask yourselves, continually, 'Is my Father pleased with me?' An ingenuous child will do so to an earthly father; surely we should so honour our *heavenly* Father, and not only honour Him ourselves, but be the means of leading others to honour Him also. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. v. 16).

The church of God is destined to be the Bible of the ungodly. This is a book which they must read, though perhaps they will not read the volume of Inspiration; they must read the pages of the human heart, when the loveliness of true religion appears in the conduct of the children of God. The children of this world are obliged to admire them, even while they affect to laugh at them and call them "saints." There is a voice within, that plainly whispers

‘they are better than you;’ and they cannot help saying in their hearts, ‘Oh that we were like them.’ But sin is precious to them, and they have not resolution enough to forsake it.

Some persons talk as if a decree from God were necessary to send sinners to everlasting punishment. A decree from God! This would be a work of supererogation indeed. Oh no; it is not necessary to send sinners to hell; there they go, and will go of themselves. Man does that work effectually. There is mischief enough in the human heart to tempt Satan himself: yes, and the devil has again and again been tempted by man to tempt him.

3. Learn, moreover, to *submit to all the paternal chastisements of God*.—“We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness” (Heb. xii. 9). Submit to His chastisements; they are, perhaps, the strongest proof of His love.

4. Learn to *endeavour to be like Him*.—Be engaged with principle. Ask yourselves; what would God have the heart to be? I profess to be the temple of the living God; what ought my thoughts and affections to be? And remember He has not only given the command, “Be ye perfect,” but has promised that perfection as a blessing (Ps. cxxxviii. 8). “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear chil-

dren" (Eph. v. 1); by which the Apostle means, be ye like God. All the perfections of Deity are engaged in the work; it will and must be accomplished. "Predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29). The predestination of God involves nothing but good; and this is another reason why we should seek every good at His hands.

5. Learn to *abide by His instructions in all things*.—We are not, as a professing people, to suffer the examples, the evil, or even the good examples of others, to be our rule. Our rule is the command of God: and there is this peculiarity in His commands, they have all the sanctions of Infinity and Eternity.

We cannot but love and respect the image of the living God wherever found. Would we trace it in all its glory, we must go to Jesus, "who suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21). He presents his Father with an atonement, and us with an example. He has promised to give us His Holy Spirit, and to save us from every enemy; then, and not till then, will salvation be perfect.

6. Lastly, learn to *trust God at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances*.—Trust Him for all good, without one single exception. He has nothing but good to communicate to His family. True, some of His dispensations may be painful to our feelings; yet what is painful to the feelings is often salutary to the frame. A medicine prescribed

by a physician may be very nauseous, but it may be the means of saving life. Thus it is with all the medicines presented to us by our heavenly Physician. His own life and health are in them ! But above all things seek spiritual blessings, and seek them daily. We have the promise of the Lord that "He will give grace and glory ; and that no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psal. lxxxiv. 11).

Learn to trust God when every earthly comfort fails. The children of God are sometimes placed in circumstances exquisitely painful ; and then they stand in need of God's peculiar care, and much of the energy of the Divine Spirit, to keep them from sinking. Now it is recorded in Scripture, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up" (Psal. xxvii. 10). It is hard to be forsaken by father and mother ; but God has promised to be the Father of the fatherless, and the Husband of the widow : "in God the fatherless findeth mercy" (Hosea xiv. 3).—I cannot help thinking of a country-woman of mine who was once reprov'd by her own child, whose father was dead : "Mother, why do you cry ?" "What shall I do, what shall I do ; thy father is dead, I know not what to do :—" the child said, "Mother, I will tell you what to do ; sing the praises of God." She felt the reproof ; the truth reached her, not only from the lips of her son, but from her God. Yes, God is worthy of being praised in the midst of our troubles : they are the ministers of His glory and of our good.

To conclude : Remember this endearing relationship when your faith seems to be annihilated.

The believer, when he beholds his sins marshalled against him in battle array, when his eye is turned exclusively to them, is ready to sink, not only into despondency but despair. Ever, then, let the mercy of God be kept in view ; let the love that prompted Him to send His Son to die for us be dwelt upon ; and let distressed sinners think of God “ our Father !” of Christ our Brother ! You will then know, in every sense, how you ought to think of Him ; and learn, as others have done, to triumph in Him.

Some young believers have been tempted to pray that the Lord would visit them with afflictions. They have heard others speak of the exercises they have gone through ; of the dark and painful hours they have passed, when dwelling on the corruption of their own hearts ; and as they have not felt these, they have hastily concluded that they were not of the family of heaven : but God has eventually visited them, till they have been obliged to cry out, “ Spare me, O spare me Lord !”

There are seasons of deep spiritual affliction (compared with which all the afflictions of earth in the aggregate are but little), when God seems to hide his face ; and, to chastise His child for his rebellion, throwing (if I may so speak) the sparks and flames of hell into his face. What bitter discipline is this ! Perhaps some of you may experience something of it at the present moment. Remember, you have a

Father, a Brother above ! Remember that others have been as severely afflicted as you are at the present time ; and they are now in glory, beyond the reach of all affliction. “ Will the Lord cast off for ever ? and will He be favourable no more ? Is His mercy clean gone for ever ? doth His promise fail for evermore ? Hath God forgotten to be gracious ? Hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies ? ” Here is a soul deeply exercised ; but read the context and you will see his triumph. Persevere in waiting upon God, and you will triumph too.

SERMON IV.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 9.

“Hallowed be thy name.”

I HAVE already observed on the interesting truth that the Saviour places himself at the head of this prayer : “My God and your God ; my Father and your Father.” “My brethren” and “thy Sons,” form the burden of his intercession before the throne of God in glory.

“Our Father which art in heaven.” Compare this with other passages of Scripture : “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John xiv. 13). This is the reason why he teaches his disciples to say “Our Father ;” they are to approach God assured that the God they venerate will most readily confer every thing that is good upon His believing people. “The Lord will give grace and glory : no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Ps. lxxxiv. 11).

I. “*Hallowed be thy name.*” I need hardly re-

mind you, that the name of an individual implies the *person*, with all the assemblage of his good, mixed, or bad qualities. God in Scripture addresses us as we address each other ; and all the figures of speech which we use ; every striking, every interesting association, that can enter into any human composition ; all are found in the Bible. The Name of God, then, comprises Himself, and all the glory of His perfections as the covenant God, Redeemer, and Saviour of mankind.

1. The Name of God comprises His *Essence*. “ Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his NAME : bring an offering, and come before Him : worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness ” (1 Chron. xvi. 29). “ O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His NAME together ” (Psal. xxxiv. 3).

2. The Name of God implies His *Perfections* ; but in an especial manner, those perfections in which we are most eminently interested ; those perfections which are usually denominated moral perfections, — His mercy, His wisdom, His truth, His faithfulness, His holiness, His justice, His love. “ The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth ; keeping mercy for thousands ; forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty ; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation ” (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7).

3. His *Titles*. “ And Moses said unto God, Behold when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall

say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, What is His name, what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exod. iii. 13, 14).

4. The Name of God sometimes in Scripture implies that *revelation* which He has been pleased to give of Himself. And for the most striking of all reasons; salvation must be filled and pervaded by God, or it can be no salvation to us. We converse with each other, now and then, as if grace were something distinct from God; but there is no spiritual gift, there is no spiritual blessing, that is or can be separated from Himself. He is the life of the soul, and for that reason the life of every grace that inhabits the bosom of His believing children. "Let them that love thy Name be joyful in thee" (Ps. v. 11). "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John viii. 32). The Truth, and that truth inspired by God Himself, which is absolutely necessary to save us from ourselves; and, in that salvation, from every other enemy.

5. The Name of God sometimes implies, in Scripture, the *service of God*. Thus it was the intention of David to build a house for the Name of the Lord; that is, for the service of the Lord; but God told him, that he had been a man of war, and had shed blood, and therefore he was not destined to build it (1 Kings v. 5, 1 Chron. xxviii. 3): but Solomon

was to build the house because God is a God of peace in His Son, of whom Solomon was a type. Yet, at the same time, God gave credit to David for the excellence of his purpose. Yes ; He marks every thing that is pleasing to Him, within the inmost recesses of the human bosom. A thought, a wish, or even a sigh, in unison with His will, can never go unrewarded.

6. By the Name of God is sometimes implied in Scripture, the covenant and purpose of His mercy. This is the reason why the Saviour himself, in addressing his Father, says to Him, "I will declare Thy Name unto My brethren ; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee" (Ps. xxii. 22 ; Heb. ii. 12) ; that in My name they may approach, and worship Thee in spirit and in truth.

II. "*Hallowed be thy Name.*"—This is the first petition, and justly so ; for true religion can have no existence but where the Name of God is hallowed. God is infinitely superior to every other being ; and must necessarily occupy the supreme place. It is an absolute impossibility that He should occupy the second. One striking proof of spiritual integrity is this ; that the individual is disposed to give to God the honour due unto His Name : to exalt Him perpetually above every thing. Have you and I learned this lesson ? Forgive me, for confessing with shame and confusion, in the pulpit this evening, that, though I am

striving hard to learn it day after day, yet I am making very poor progress. I am only just beginning to learn it; and if I had not Infinite Wisdom, as well as Infinite Love, to teach me, I should learn nothing.

It is when man comes into contact with all the perfections of God in His covenant, and the work of His Son and Spirit, that all the rebellion of the heart evinces itself. It is not in the midst of the gross sins of which he has been guilty, that this rebellion is so apparent, as in his opposing God in all the glory of His salvation.

Perhaps some of you may have known what it is to feel pride within your bosoms, swelling itself into gigantic dimensions, in resisting with all its might a God of mercy; when He is bringing home to you a sense of your absolute dependence, and explaining to you the workings of your own mind. In reality, quarrelling with God, because you are not individually Gods. Oh! it is a hard lesson to read the human heart. Could I live without the workings of corruption, could I live and be free from sin, I would willingly be a galley-slave all the days of my life.

The reason is obvious why this petition occupies the first place; why the Name of God is first introduced. God has His own glory primarily and perpetually in view: this is absolutely necessary; the welfare of the creature could not be secured without it. "The Lord hath made all things for Himself" (Prov. xvi. 4). When His

glory occupies the first place, then all that we can possibly want or desire follows in train. God begins; and not only so, He carries on His own work (the work of grace) in the human heart, for His own Name's sake. This is the reason why He is not wearied with us: but for this, we should have provoked Him to leave us long ago. This is the reason he Himself assigns, again and again, for not having destroyed His once chosen people; "for My Name's sake." This is the reason why God ought to be perpetually in our view. And nothing less than this can fully satisfy the mind of him who is illumined by the Spirit of the living God. When that highly privileged individual knows this important truth, he sees things in the light in which God Himself sees them; and comes to the same conclusion with Him; if I may be allowed to use such terms in speaking of the Most High; who knows every thing without the elaborate process of reasoning, which must, in most cases, take place in our own bosoms. God is first in His own view, and should be first in ours. In perusing the history of saints in Scripture, we find that God is the first object with them; they looked up to Him; they were taught to hallow His Holy Name; and in doing so they invariably found their own welfare. God is very jealous of His own glory, and will not give it to another.

He will and must be first. Nothing worse can be said of the devil than this, that he wished

to give to God the second place. In this is comprised all evil of every kind and degree, from the time of the Fall to the present day; and from the present moment, for ever: and all those who are not taught by the Spirit of God, to keep His glory primarily and perpetually in view, must one day or other rue the awful consequences: according to the word of the Lord in Malachi, "If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my Name, saith the Lord of hosts; I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart" (Mal. ii. 1).

Read with accuracy the workings of your own minds, and you will find that you are opposed to nothing more than this. And here we find sin and rebellion against the Most High, in a degree in which it cannot be exhibited by Satan himself. He is opposed only to a God of holiness and justice; but we know what it is to offend against a God of *Mercy*. Oh that we knew ourselves! While I am addressing you, I am sensible that there is a principle within my own bosom opposing itself to the majesty of God, in all the loveliness of His covenant offices. And what is the consequence of this? I am taught to prize the covenant office of the Holy Spirit, as fully as the covenant office of Christ. One is altogether as necessary as the other: for, were it possible, after millions of ages spent in perfect and spotless obedience, for the Holy Spirit to withhold His sovereign grace,

we should perish evermore. We have only to read ourselves accurately and profoundly to be of one mind with respect to all the essentials of religion. If we differ, we shall differ only with respect to things of very inferior consequence. But it is delightful to think of that blissful period when we shall meet before the throne of God, seeing "eye to eye;" the intellects of all being equally illumined, and the hearts of all wholly engaged with the perfections of God; without even the shadow of a shade of difference; and that for ever.

III. HOW IS HIS NAME TO BE HALLOWED? I shall endeavour to answer this question.

Let it be remembered that the holiness of God admits of no increase; of no diminution. No one can add to His perfections in the least degree; it is an infinite impossibility. Even the work of Jesus Christ himself, in one important sense, did not enrich them. The obedience of His own Son did not make His name more glorious; it only served to evince His essential glory. Nothing can be added to His perfections, even by the work of a Divine Person; much less by any thing that we can say or do. But let it be remembered also, that the work of Christ involved in it the brightest development of the glory of the Divine perfections; and at the same time the highest good that can be imparted to finite beings. Christ as a Divine Person purchased every blessing for us.

To hallow or sanctify the Name of God implies this, to keep His holiness perpetually in view. Divines tell us, and very justly, that power is the life, and holiness the beauty of Deity. Every moral agent who is truly wise keeps the holiness of God continually in view; and continually remembers the injunction, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. i. 16). It is in His moral, not in His natural perfections, that we are destined to imitate God for ever. In His natural perfections we cannot do it. Creative power, for example, is incommunicable. We cannot call into existence a particle of dust, nor can we preserve it when created: but not so His moral attributes; the moral perfections of God are communicated to us by the Holy Spirit; and the same Spirit is engaged to bring them to perfection eventually within the bosoms of finite beings like ourselves.

There is a peculiarity in the manner in which the Saviour expresses himself in this petition; he expresses himself not only in the most rich and comprehensive, but in the most accurate manner. He does not say "glorify" My Father's Name, though if he had said so we should have known what he meant by it. All creation glorifies God. Every thing that He has called into existence has a tongue which glorifies its Creator and Preserver. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handy-work" (Psal. xix. 1). But it would be improper to say that the firmament sanctifies God; that the sun, moon, and

stars sanctify God: though they glorify, they cannot possibly sanctify Him. None but moral agents who wear His image can sanctify Him. None can reflect the moral image of God, but His own moral creatures engaged in His service; engaged in His worship in heaven above, or in the earth beneath. It is the peculiar, I will not say *privilege*, but *prerogative*, of His own family, to hallow or sanctify His holy Name; to reflect the beauty of His holiness; and let even His enemies *see* (whether they will *learn* or not) what the perfections of God are, as revealed in the Scriptures.

The volumes of creation and providence were open to men for many ages, but they learned very little. Some tell us a great deal of natural religion: volumes have been written upon the subject; but to what purpose? Man cannot possibly learn true religion from any thing but a revelation from God. Nothing can bind the conscience but a revelation from God. If a revelation from God had not reached man, I should boldly declare that the sun, moon, and stars, did not oblige me to worship God. I could not have ascended from the creature to the Creator: I have no capacity for it. I should not have known whether there had been one God or ten thousand. No, it is a command from God himself that imposes the obligation; and when God presents us with a revelation, then every thing we see increases the obligation. What is called "natural religion," is one of the strong holds of infidelity; and it is to be

lamented that so many great and good men have dwelt much upon it, when in reality it is a non-entity. But it may be said, does not St. Paul tell us that God Himself may be perused in His works? Most assuredly; but in consequence of having previously received a revelation from Him. And it ought to be remembered, moreover, that the Apostle was writing to those who had received a revelation, though they had blended with it the follies and absurdities of men. This revelation has travelled into the remotest nations of the earth, or men would have had no idea of the perfections of God. Before man can ascend from the creature to the Creator, he must be able to comprehend the link which unites them together: and this his finite capacity cannot accomplish by the feeble light of nature, unassisted by Revelation.

The Apostle presents us with what is singularly striking and instructive when he says, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith." I repeat it again, that Revelation alone binds man, and binds the command of God upon him. Wherever it is found, it is equally binding, whether in the Law or the Gospel; for the authority of God must live in all His dispensations.

I would now lay down the Scriptural rule for

glorifying God ; or, as I have pointed out the distinction between the two words, I would say, *sanctifying* God.

And here I beg you will not imagine that I am personal in any thing that I am about to say. I make a general appeal to the conscience by drawing the bow at a venture, and leaving the wind of God to waft it to its destined mark.

First, then, Hallowing or sanctifying the Name of God, involves the highest *reverence* in the worship of God. "This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified" (Lev. x. 3).

To begin with principle: "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts" (1 Pet. iii. 15). We know, perfectly well, what the feelings of an obedient son are when he meditates on the character and benevolence of an affectionate father: we know what he feels towards his father; and can easily conceive the indignation that would take possession of his bosom if he heard his parent's name traduced. May we revere the name of God in our hearts, and never presume to engage in His worship, either in public or in private, without silently invoking the aid of His Holy Spirit. I need not tell you, that when the heart is right, every thing else will be right. We stand in need of having our principles corrected perpetually: and, blessed be God, the spring of action is *in Himself*, and He has covenanted to carry on the work

to perfection. Let the Name of God, then, be revered in the heart, in the closet, in the family, and in the public assembly of his saints. We have more reason to reverence the Name of God than the angels in heaven have. Do you ask why? I answer, we are under much deeper obligations than they are. We have beheld the Divine perfections unfolding themselves in all their glory in our nature; and in that nature following us into the depths of hell, beneath the feet of all the enemies of God; to raise us to the zenith of glory.

Secondly, The Name of God is hallowed by *fruitfulness* in every good word and work. When you see an individual who is desirous of promoting the glory of God by doing all the good he can to his fellow-creatures, oh! prize him as a treasure invaluable in this corrupt world. We want *individual fruitfulness* in the day in which we live. "Ye are the salt of the earth" (Matt. v. 13). Remember this, ye professors of religion; and let those who are determined to go to hell, see in you what they ought to see. "Herein is My Father glorified," says the Saviour, "that ye bear much fruit" (John xv.8). You can be conscious of being His disciples, only while loving, serving, and delighting in Him. Angels must look down with delight on the individual who is engaged in the service of God: they know what difficulties (internal and external) he has to struggle with, and the lovely development of the principle of obedience, in the midst of so much opposition, must be peculiarly delightful to

them. If you saw a flame weak as that of a candle, in the midst of the ocean, it would surprise you to behold that flame gradually gathering strength, till it overspread and drank up the whole. But we have to witness a still greater wonder, and that within our own bosoms. Grace is at first very small, and very weak; but it is destined eventually to overspread them and to consume all our unhallowed lusts and passions. Let us look for the miracle within—a miracle greater than any we can read of—the miracle which changes the worst into the best of men.

Thirdly, The Name of God is to be hallowed by *faithfulness* to Him in every thing. “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever” (1 Pet. iv. 11). He who wishes to sanctify the Name of God, must consider that all he has to do, temporal as well as spiritual, is to be done to the glory of God. This should be the commencement and termination of every thing.

Some persons seem to have an idea of separating business and religion: but, no; they ought to be involved in each other. It is a mercy and a blessing to be engaged in business; and business was intended by God to be subservient to the purposes of true religion. I would appeal to some individuals, whom God has blessed with much of

the wealth of this world, and who are not obliged to labour as others are, to earn their daily bread : Tell me, to how many temptations are you not exposed from frequent hours of leisure ? Doubtless Satan takes advantage of these, and of all peculiar seasons, to ply the mind with his wily snares. Man was intended to be active in body and in soul : even in Eden Adam was commanded to cultivate the ground. God has evidently intended to fill business with Himself, to make it a blessing, and not an interruption ; and man is never truly happy till he has learned this lesson, “ Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or *whatsoever* ye do, do all to the glory of God ” (1 Cor. x. 31).

Why am I commanded to support this frail frame ? For the glory of God, that I may serve God with my body and spirit, which are His. “ Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord ” (Rom. xii. 11).

Many of you are engaged in business : What do your consciences say to these things ? I do conjure you, when you retire to your homes, to fall on your knees, entreating the Lord to fill you with his fulness, that by his blessing religion may form in you one glorious whole, embracing you altogether—yourselves, your wives, your families, and all your concerns.

But is this the case in London, generally speaking ? Alas ! no : God is little thought of by people in business, and their conduct proves it. I ask you, is God in *your* consciences, behind *your*

✓ counters, and in *your* counting-houses? Oh do not sacrifice the wealth of heaven, the favour of God, and peace of conscience, for worldly gain. Forbid it, Lord!

To hallow the Name of God, then, is to carry God Himself with us, and in us, into every thing we do.

Lastly, the Name of God is to be hallowed by a ceaseless *life of faith*.

We are assured that it shall be well with the righteous. They have their troubles and difficulties, but God is with them; and He is engaged to lead them triumphantly through all. "Them that honour Me, I will honour" (1 Sam. ii. 30). ✓

We all believe that Messiah is to reign gloriously; and that all error in principle and vice in practice will be trampled into *nothing* beneath the feet of the Lord of hosts. I firmly believe that we are living in the dawn of that sacred day. I may differ from some of my brethren, as to whether the Saviour is to reign on earth; but we all agree that a principle of holiness is to reign in the human heart—that Jesus is to be enthroned in the human bosom: we all agree that people are to love and serve the Lord more generally, and with a great deal more cheerfulness, in that blessed period, than they do now. But let it be remembered, that for all supplies of grace we are invited to the throne of God at the present moment: let it be remembered, that, if we are straitened, we are straitened only in ourselves. Let us lay

siege to the Throne of Grace; and never be silent, till we are conscious that God is with us, and in us, of a truth.

To conclude : Let us learn, in the first place, that holiness ought to be the ambition and the pursuit of every reasonable being, and that perpetually. It is impossible to do justice to the human intellect, or to the human heart, without it. Until the image of God take possession of both, neither the human intellect nor the human heart can reach its destiny. Nothing can fill the human heart but the living God. The image of God must ever live in union and communion with its Parent; and the covenant of eternity was entered into with this view. We were predestined to be “conformed to the image of His Son.” The predestination of God will prompt us, if we are truly wise, to be diligent in the use of all the means of grace. The strongest encouragement a believer can have to seek for holiness, is to know, that God has predestined to make His family holy. There is no predestination to evil, except the transgressor’s own; the predestination of God has nothing to do with it. Predestination to evil is to be found only in the covenant of sin and Satan, not in the covenant of God: the covenant of God predestined the destruction of evil, and this is its glory.

2. Learn, again, that lukewarmness in religion is highly criminal in the sight of God. I am afraid

that in the days in which we live we are too much like the Laodiceans of old. Remember,—I am now quoting the words of God,—of them He says, “So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” We do not like to see individuals lukewarm in an earthly service; it is a disgrace to be so, and may prove ruinous. We do not like to see a man trifling with his business, but cheerfully and fully engaged in it. How much more, then, when we are engaged with the King of kings; with Him who has done all for us; on whom we depend for every thing? And when we consider the life of our Saviour here on earth; how ceaselessly He was engaged, without one single moment of intermission, from the womb, till He cried out on the cross “It is finished,” in serving God and man; it surely must spur our minds to the most active energy in his cause. Do not be surprised at what I am about to tell you, but receive the truth into the inmost recesses of your hearts: He was as fully engaged in serving *man* as in serving God. All he did, comprised in it *as fully* the interest of his church, as it did the glory of God. Has the *Saviour*, then, been so ceaselessly engaged, and in this respect left me so eminent an example; has the Lord of life and glory stooped even to hell *for my sake*; and shall I be lukewarm in His cause? Forbid it, Heaven! forbid it, O thou infinitely gracious Jehovah!

Lastly. Learn to treat, even in conversation, +

the Name of God with the utmost reverence. It is painful to hear in discourse, and to read in public papers, such expressions as “Gracious God!” “Good Heavens!” &c. They know not what they do. Never trifle with the Name of God. And you, my dear children, remember what I am telling you: Do not take God’s Name in vain, for it is a very great sin: be not engaged in it yourselves, and put your hands to your ears when others do it. We should accustom ourselves, in all our thoughts and words, to treat the Name of God with the utmost reverence. Some individuals introduce the Name of God into a joke, to give it a zest: let nothing of this kind be once named among those who call themselves His disciples. Whenever we think of God, we should remember, that, though Jesus died that those who had taken His Name in vain might be forgiven; yet that he died, too, that His holy Name might be hallowed here on earth; and that for the same purpose His Holy Spirit might be given to reside in the hearts of His people. *Amen.*

SERMON V.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 10.

“Thy Kingdom come.”

THIS follows the preceding petition with the utmost propriety. It is impossible for any individual to pray that the kingdom of God may come, without hallowing, or sanctifying, the Name of God.

I. Let us consider, first, “THE KINGDOM OF HIS PROVIDENCE.”

We know, indeed, nothing of His kingdom but from *Revelation*: there we read its wonders. The idea of natural religion is a mere dream. Nothing, as I have insisted again and again, but a revelation from God, can teach us; and nothing but a revelation from God can bind us. The volume of Creation can give us no definite rule, and therefore can impose no *obligation*. But “by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.” This was felt, in an eminent degree, by Nebuchadnezzar. He was a

wonderful man, and we see in him, as conspicuously as in any that ever lived, the striking effect of the grace of God. But he was first humbled in the dust of the earth; and we must be deeply humbled too, before we are made thoroughly sensible that we have lost the Spirit of God. “At the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me; and I blessed the Most High; and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?” (Dan. iv. 3, 4.) What a striking contrast does Nebuchadnezzar here exhibit to what he was before! Once, God was not in all his thoughts: now, God seems to fill his soul with love and gratitude; while he presents us with the perfections of Jehovah as fully and faithfully as any of the inspired penmen of the Old Testament. The providence of God is to us peculiarly interesting, because we are involved in it every moment. Some individuals, of learning and science, have indeed presumed to deny a *particular* providence, while they admit a *general superintending* providence. This is the very essence of folly; and Atheism itself is more consistent. To admit a general and to deny a particular providence, is a

contradiction in terms. The mischief has arisen, in a great measure, from the hastiness with which professors of religion have attempted, now and then, to interpret the particular providence of God. But His providence does not fail, because they err in the interpretation of it. A particular providence preserves every atom; every particle of dust that flies before us. Science will prove this, in the clearest manner. It is not in the power of created being to destroy a single particle of matter. Fire, the most powerful natural agent with which we are acquainted, cannot effect this: it can only decompose, and form new combinations. Connected with the indestructibility of matter, mark another fact—viz. the tendency of matter to return to its original nothingness, and the proof of a particular providence will be found most complete. The power which called matter into existence, still preserves it. The reason why no particle of matter can be destroyed is, that the energy of the Divine Being pervades it continually. It may travel from East to West, and from the Equator to the Poles; but it travels on the wings, and is preserved by the power, of Jehovah, beyond the reach of destruction. The declaration of our Lord, that the hairs of your head are all numbered, involves a scientific truth; and I invite all my friends, who are of a philosophic turn of mind, to connect literature and science with religion, and devote them to it. We are not afraid of knowledge: it is the *abuse* of knowledge that we fear:

the legitimate use of knowledge will be a blessing, and was intended to be a blessing, to man. And what is the legitimate use of knowledge, but to be subservient to the purposes of true religion?

From the kingdom of God's providence learn four valuable lessons.

1. To fear God, who rules and overrules all things, continually. "Who would not fear thee, O thou King of nations!" (Jer. x. 7.) God intended that we should peruse His providence with accuracy, in the light of His revelation: yes, even with His own eye; and at the same time sing His praises with His own heart!

2. Learn to rejoice in God at all times. His providence rules over all. In the midst of all the trials and difficulties of life, learn perpetually to acknowledge Him.

3. Pray that the providence of God may be replete with blessings to His people. So He intended that it should be; and so it has always been, as you will find abundantly proved in the history of mankind.

"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof." "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." This is to be your prayer and mine, to the day of death: we are to give Him no rest; He desires none. Here is our encouragement to prayer. We may sometimes, by our importunity, weary an earthly friend, till he banish us from his presence; but, we thank

God that He cannot be wearied. He, and He only, *is pleased* with ceaseless importunity. Let this, then, be our prayer continually.

4. That the providence of God is the hand-maid of His grace ; preserving His people from a thousand evils, of which they know nothing at the present moment. Thus, they are said to be sanctified by “ God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.” The child—or which is more literally true, one who is to be a child—preserved in the arms of a God of mercy, to be called in His own time. The best commentary on this will be found in our own individual history, from childhood to the present time ; for he has read himself to little purpose who does not trace the hand of God in every thing ; and see how he has been conducted, by methods apparently the most unlikely, to the arms of a covenant God. Oh ! we shall find wonders in ourselves, for which to praise God through the countless ages of eternity !

II. But I humbly presume that the KINGDOM OF HIS GRACE is chiefly meant, and the Saviour himself expresses this, when he says, “ Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand ” (Matt. iv. 17). He was about to establish His kingdom in the hearts of men : and, wherever God has an obedient subject, *there* is His kingdom. In the bosom of every individual whose heart is right with God, there is the monarchy of *Jehovah* : *There* He erects a throne. This is universally true : true of all the

angels of God, when first created; true of our first parents: when they were created, God's kingdom was in their hearts. But this is most eminently true with respect to the humanity of Jesus Christ himself. He is, as I have before stated, the first of Subjects, as well as the first of Kings. Would we see the perfections of God shining in all their glory, unfolding themselves in all their excellency? We shall find them in the humanity of the Son of God. While on earth He was perfectly subject to His Father. His obedience was unsullied by the least particle of evil. We see the perfections of God more fully developed in the person and work of Messiah, than if we could descend into hell, to peruse the torments of the damned; more fully than if we could ascend to heaven, to peruse the pure and spotless worship of saints and angels.

In the person of Messiah we find true obedience bursting upon us in all the effulgence of Deity; and, in that obedience we find all the glories of His justice, as well as all the glories of His sovereignty. We find the full subjection of a finite being, the absolute dominion of an Infinite Being, only in the humanity of the Son of God: and this carried on progressively to a state of perfection. It is true, that, as God, He was perfect; but it is equally true that the powers of his mind, and the graces of his heart, admitted of wonderful degrees of perfection. It is said of Him, that "he increased in wisdom and stature, and in

favour with God and man." And again we are told, that "it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." "Though He were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. And, being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

The kingdom of grace, then, in the human heart, resembles the kingdom which lives *eternally in the humanity of the Son of God*: and the Holy Spirit, in bringing all the family of God to perfection, has His eye fixed perpetually on Jesus Christ. Generally speaking, the model of an artist is far inferior to that which is to be produced; but here, the Model is infinitely the most perfect: here we see a perfect model of the kingdom of God. In the light of this truth we understand the Saviour, when he says, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John xviii. 36).

The kingdom that reigned in His heart, was wholly spiritual; and so is the kingdom that is to live for ever in the hearts of His family. The kingdom of God, then, means the reign of His grace within the human heart. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom.

xiv. 17). “The kingdom of God is within you” (Luke xvii. 21). We are said to be “temples of God;” and why the temple of God? Because God Himself is to be worshipped by us in the inmost recesses of our own bosoms, which thus become the temples of the living God. In other words, the kingdom of God means the influence of that purity in the human heart which reigns in the bosom of Jesus Christ himself at the present moment.

III. The kingdom of God evidently implies, likewise the KINGDOM OF HIS GLORY where the Saviour is now at the right hand of God. But to this kingdom His people are to be brought by death, for “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. xv. 50).

The kingdom of God’s glory, then, consists of two classes of persons : those who are to be raised from the dust of death ; and those who are in glory now, and who never saw death here below. In that kingdom His people will have a body perfect, like the Saviour’s ; and a soul perfect, like the Saviour’s ; a body and a soul perpetually obedient to all the motions of the Divine Spirit, and subservient to the worship of God above ; for they will be like the Saviour. The kingdom of grace is introductory to the kingdom of glory ; and, where the kingdom of grace is not established in time, the kingdom of glory cannot be established in eternity. It is a truth, sealed by the testimony, and even the oath, of God himself, that the wicked

shall not enter into His kingdom. None but the clean shall enter there; none but the holy shall approach His presence; every thing that defileth shall be banished from Him for ever. Oh, my brethren! would you be the subjects of glory hereafter, you must be the subjects of grace here. It is a fearfully delusive dream, to imagine that men may live as they please, and then at last, by receiving the Sacrament, or reading a few prayers, previous to dissolution, be admitted to heaven. No; their sins will drive them to hell! This is the awful prospect we have before us, if we wilfully neglect to return to God, while He is waiting to be gracious to us, and inviting to Himself every one of the sons and daughters of Adam, who are privileged to hear His holy Gospel. “*Now* is the accepted time! *Now* is the day of salvation!” O thoughtless sinner! hear His voice; come to the Saviour; enter into the kingdom of His grace; and you will infallibly be ushered by Himself into the kingdom of His glory.

IV. I would now consider, in the fourth place, the prayer, “*Thy kingdom come,*” and endeavour to shew what it involves.

1. It involves the prosperity of the Church of God, Jewish and Gentile; or rather the Church without any distinction whatever; for “there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free; but all are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. iii. 28): one flock, under one Shepherd, in one fold: all subjects of

one government, all participators in the same privileges, and all heirs of the same glory. The ancient Prophets looked forward to the Gentile Church, and connected its prosperity with that of the Jewish. They loved God, and the souls of men, and it gave them exquisite pleasure to see, through the vista of futurity, the kingdom of God established in all the earth. "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest; until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Isa. lxii. 1). Connect this with the passage I quoted before, and you will find it a privilege to convert the promises of God into prayers. It was for this end all the promises of God were given; and it is God's delight that we upon our knees remind Him of them (2 Peter i. 4).

2. In using this petition, we pray that God would be pleased to bruise Satan, and all his emissaries, under the feet of His church. He has Himself promised to trample upon them; and not only so, but that all His family shall trample the necks of His enemies under their feet also: for it is written, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. xvi. 20).

3. We pray that God would send forth faithful ministers to dispense His truth: men who are at once lions and lambs; ministers possessed of courage to preach the whole truth of God. Perhaps it is as necessary for us at this day in Britain, as it ever was. It is the Truth of God alone

that is to preserve us from spiritual slavery; and subject to it we must certainly be, unless God himself establish His throne in the midst of us.

Parents! guardians! teachers of youth! I charge you before God to instil the most profound hatred of *Poper*y into the hearts of those you have to teach. Not a hatred to *Papists*; by no means: the love of Papists, but hatred of their errors. And may we be encouraged to pray continually, that God would send faithful ministers amongst us: that He would give us religious Bishops, men after his own heart, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost: that He would give us religious Deans and Dignitaries, and Ministers of every degree who love the souls of men better than all earthly preferment; Ministers who will seek the souls of men as their reward, and lose sight of all other considerations.

May these things live *ardently* in our prayers, and fly continually from our bosoms to the throne of God! It is impossible to be neutral: we must be for God, or against Him; for Christ, or against Him. "He that is not with Me is against Me" (Matt. xii. 30), says our Saviour. There is no neutral ground here.

4. We pray for the success of all means of grace, public and private. God blesses all His own means to effect His own purposes: and the purposes of God, as I have often told you, ought to afford the strongest encouragement to prayer. God has purposed to hear and answer prayer: "I will yet for this be inquired of, saith the Lord Almighty" (Ezek. xxxvi. 37). We see, indeed,

a great deal of evil in this country at the present moment ; wickedness meets us with a bold front at every corner ; but yet we must acknowledge, to the praise of the glory of God, that there is a great deal of good. May this good be abundantly multiplied ! Do not let us say, We can do nothing to promote it. We can all do something, however little. Suppose every drop of water in the ocean were to say, I am but a drop ; I am not wanted ; my absence will not be felt ; I will ascend in vapour ; I will rise to the sun, or to the moon ; I will seek another abode : The ocean would soon be dry ! Remember, that as the ocean is composed of drops of water, so the mightiest works of man, from the earliest period to the present time, have been not unfrequently the result of small exertions bearing together upon one point. “ God is not unrighteous, to forget your work, and labour of love.” The sigh that ascends from a broken and contrite heart, will be remembered by Him in the resurrection of the just. If some of you can do nothing more for the welfare of Christ’s kingdom, you can at least pray for it : pray, then ; pray, I beseech you, and be assured that you will do more by your prayers, than could be accomplished by all the riches of the world without them.

Lastly, and above all, let our prayers ascend to heaven, that God may keep us, and all His family, by His own power, through faith, unto salvation. A religion that would be effective in doing any

thing for God, must, first of all, fully embrace ourselves. A man must have self-love, he must be eminently interested in his own well-being, before he can be truly generous to others. When we enter the inmost recesses of our own bosoms, and discover the many monsters that inhabit that dreary abode; when we learn what we are, and what we deserve at the hands of God; and what God has done for us, and what He is doing, and what He will do within us by the agency of the Holy Spirit—(and these are things with which we should be perseveringly and perpetually engaged)—we shall then be under the influence of such a disposition that we cannot live at home; we shall feel ourselves so rich, that we must dispense to others; we shall feel so much for the welfare of our fellow-creatures, that we cannot let them rush on to destruction unmolested; we shall break up the highway that leads to perdition, and hurl the fragments at their guilty souls; if peradventure the Lord may have mercy upon them, and turn them out of the path. This will be the work of every individual who feels the value of true religion. Some, by their conduct, seem to imagine that religion is selfish and personal in such a sense as to be regardless of all besides. By no means. That is not the religion of Jesus; it does not deserve the name: true religion gives man the wings of Angels, to fly to some object or other in which he can delight, and gratify himself fully in serving his Father and his God!

From what I have said, learn the five following lessons.

1st. That it is woful hypocrisy to pray from Sabbath to Sabbath, “Thy kingdom come,” while we are living in sin. Are there any of this description here? It is my province, as a minister of the Gospel, to find out sinners of every description; to shew them to themselves; to tell them of the evil of their state, and of their imminent peril. Oh, how much formal and hypocritical prayer have we in this country at the present time! My brethren, is it reasonable to suppose that the Saviour taught us this admirable, this unrivalled Prayer, that we might repeat it with our lips, and straightway both forget it and him? Such prayers, if prayers they may be called, do not ascend to heaven; but rather descend to hell, and drag the thoughtless individual after them. Do not fall into a mistake, and imagine, from what I am now telling you, that it is not the duty of all to pray: most assuredly it is: but it is also the duty of all to break off their sins by repentance, at the same time. *Both* are their duty: and, indeed, we never find the one to thrive and flourish without the other.

2d. Consider it as the highest honour to do something for God, and to promote His kingdom. In my humble opinion, it is more honourable to serve God in flesh and blood here below, in the midst of all the imperfections of humanity, than to serve Him as saints and angels do in heaven. Oh, do not think little of a life of faith, while you

can do any thing for God. When God would honour, that He might glorify, His Son for ever, He sent him down *to earth*, to be a *servant of men*. This was the language of God from eternity: "I will glorify my Son." Blessed God! what is thy purpose? how dost Thou intend to glorify thy Son? "I will glorify Him, first of all, by making Him a Servant of Men." And He was as much a servant of men, as He was a servant of God.

There is no higher honour than to be engaged in the service of God. It is said, that at Kidderminster, where the great Baxter lived, the effects of that man's zeal live to the present day. We do not know what we can do; but we should enter upon the work of the Lord, looking up to Him for His blessing. Yes, my brethren, in the midst of a deep sense of your own unworthiness, which leads you to exclaim, Who am I? what a sinful wretch am I! let me tell you, this spirit is absolutely necessary, to carry you through, and in the strength of God to ensure you success.

3d. Learn, that, if *we* will not engage in the work of the Lord, He will not be at a loss for *other servants*. If we refuse the proffered honour, He will reserve it for others. Oh let me, then, conjure you to seize the glorious opportunity: whatever your talents may be, improve them to His glory.

4th. We do not work at hazard; there is no "peradventure we may not succeed:" we shall undoubtedly succeed, though at the present moment

we know not exactly how, or when. "He hath purposed, and He will bring it to pass" (Isa. xlvi. 11). It is the privilege of the Lord's children to work in the dark; and an obedient child will not stay till he hears every "Why" answered, No! affection prompts him to proceed; and the language of his heart is, I shall know "why" hereafter: it cannot rest a secret for ever; and in the mean time I will work, to honour and obey my Heavenly Father. God has promised that His Church shall be a glorious Church. True religion is destined to live in the East and in the West, in the North and in the South: the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ (Rev. xv. 11).

5th. While engaged in this glorious work, in fighting the battles of the Lord, remember the rich reward; remember what the Saviour himself says to His own family: His words are peculiarly striking, and worthy of our most serious attention. "To him that overcometh will I give to sit down with Me on My throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne" (Rev. iii. 21). The humanity of Jesus Christ participates in the purity, the peace, the bliss, and the triumphs, of Deity. *His destiny* is the destiny of all His followers, without one single exception. And, lest any should shrink from receiving the blessings, and being diligently and delightfully engaged in His work, let it be remembered *whom* the Saviour is addressing: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and

increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. iii. 17). These are the individuals to whose view our Lord presents the blessings of *His* own, and *His Father's* kingdom! Had they described themselves, amidst a full consciousness of their own unworthiness, they could not have given us a more faithful picture of wretchedness. Blessed be God for such a Saviour, and that such servants are invited to receive at his hands a full, free, and everlasting salvation; and are honoured by being engaged in His glorious work. May this blessing be ours, and all the glory shall be His, through the countless ages of eternity.

SERMON VI.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 10.

Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

As perfection is the destiny of the believer, he is unjust to God and to himself, unless he keep it continually in view.

Perfection of every kind, and in the highest degree of which our natures are capable, is a blessing comprised in the covenant of the Triune Jehovah. The object which Messiah kept perpetually in view, was his own perfection: that his brethren might be made eternally perfect, in and by himself, for "It became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. ii. 10). "Be ye holy as God is holy, and perfect as God is perfect" (1 Pet. i. 16; Matt. v. 48; Luke vi. 36—40). The command is given because it is connected with a blessing: it is as if God had told His family, It is my determination to make you as perfect as the hand of Omnipotence

can make you : therefore keep the blessing primarily and perpetually in view.

I. “ *Thy will be done.*” The first thing to be considered is the SECRET WILL OF GOD.

We are not only in the infancy, but in the twilight of existence, while the inhabitants of this earth. There are many secrets which undoubtedly will be communicated to us hereafter, which we cannot bear at present. Our Saviour said to His disciples, “ I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now ” (John xvi. 12). “ Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face ” (1Cor. xiii. 12).

The secret will of God has in every thing His own glory in view, involving in it the welfare of His Church. There is light enough in this truth to illumine the darkest dispensations, and enable us to see the footsteps of our heavenly Father travelling before us in the night of deepest distress here on earth. “ Clouds and darkness are round about Him, but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His Throne ” (Psal. xcvi. 2). “ How unsearchable are Thy judgments, and Thy ways past finding out ” (Rom. xi. 33).

God is the only Being who has a right to keep a secret. No finite being has. Every finite being is obliged to expose himself wholly and unreservedly to the eye of God ; willingly now, or unwillingly in eternity. All the claims of justice and mercy require this at the hands of every finite being. God is the only Being who is wholly at His own disposal, the only

Being who is not accountable for any thing that He does. *We* are necessarily accountable for all things. He is accountable for nothing. Now, if finite beings are under an obligation to unbosom themselves fully, it must be to the Infinite Being. Ascriptions of praise and confessions of sin involve in them a positive act of worship.

Hear me, my brethren ; young people, do justice to what I am about to tell you ; the members of the Church of Rome, in confessing their sins to the priest, invest the priest with the attributes of Deity. Some, I am ashamed to say, of our own church would have us be silent on this subject : we dare not. It is our duty to expose the errors of the Romish Church, if so be by the Divine blessing some may be rescued from the night of superstition, and introduced to the noon of Gospel-day. The real fact is, that the confession of *every thing* that passes within the human mind involves in it an act of worship. And now, my brethren, what do you think of undeifying Deity, and deifying a wretched mortal like ourselves ?

There are times and seasons when we not only may, but ought, to confess our sins to each other ; but our confessions to each other should be under the direction of sound wisdom and prudence. For instance ; if we offend each other, it becomes us to confess our sins, and to solicit forgiveness not only at the hand of God, but at the hands of men : and in some doubtful and perplexing cases, when the young especially know not what to do, it is well to

consult with some one older and wiser than themselves ; one whose character is established for sound wisdom and true piety : but the mutual confession of *all* sin would only tend to mutual corruption. God never intended that the corruptions of the human heart should be deposited in any bosom but His own. Consider the evil that must result to society when all the sins of a family are made known beyond the circle of that family. When confession is to be made, to whom ought the wife to unbosom herself, next to her God, but to her husband ? to whom ought the daughter to confess but to her mother ? to whom ought the son to confess but to his father ? I ask you, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, are not these things in perfect unison with your own feelings ? To unbosom *the whole* of what passes within the human heart to any one but God, is high treason against the King of kings.

But to return : God has His secret Will, and it is ceaselessly engaged in working out our salvation. May we then be engaged in working out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

1. Consider, then, in the first place, *the Supremacy of God* in working all things according to the counsel of His own will.—There is only one thing which guides the will of God, and that is the infinite perfection of His nature : this influences His will perpetually. Some have contended for a freedom of the will that is not to be found, even in Deity : for even in Deity it is not independent of the disposition ; it is impossible that it should be so.

The will of every being is wholly connected with his disposition. This is the reason why there is such perfection in the will of Jehovah; it is wholly connected with His own essence. Freedom of will, in the sense in which some contend for it, is not to be found in God Himself. It has no existence but in the dreams, the awfully delusive dreams, of error. The will of God ceaselessly moves under the influence of His own perfections. Nothing less than this could possibly be a security to us.

2. His will is declared in Scripture to be *holy, just, and good* : and why? Because it is wholly connected with His essence. His will is only an emanation of His essence : and by the manifestation of His will, He shews us what He is. “The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works” (Ps. cxlv. 17).

3. In the secret, as well as in the revealed will of God, His *Omnipotence* is to be considered. Every thing He wills must inevitably come to pass. God is the only Being who knows no rival ; and He is the only Being who cannot be opposed with success. He knows no difficulty. A congregated universe would present no greater obstacle to Him, than if He were opposed by a fly. “He doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth” (Dan. iv. 35).

I now proceed to assign a few weighty reasons why we should be ardently desirous of being in all things submissive to the secret will of God.

1. *Because God is infinitely wise* as well as in-

finitely holy, just, and good. The purpose of God must involve in it His own perfection. In reading the history of saints of old, we find them, in the midst of the deepest distress, using this language, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good" (1 Sam. iii. 18). And when the Saviour himself was approaching the scene of his sufferings, and tasting the bitterness of that cup, the dregs of which he afterwards drank, he said "Not my will but thine be done" (Luke xxii. 42): "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" It is the highest honour that can be conferred upon a creature, in the midst of the most calamitous circumstances, to be enabled to say, "Thy will be done" (John xviii. 11). It will certainly be well with him; and, though calamities may threaten to overwhelm him, all will be made to work together for his good.

2. Another reason why we should be submissive to the will of God, is, that *suffering is very frequently the offspring of our own transgression*. "I will bear," said one of old, "the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him; until He plead my cause and execute judgment for me." Now he looks *forward*: "He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness" (Micah vii. 9). This is signally consolatory. When the believer is conscious of having involved himself in affliction by his own sins, even then it is his privilege to look up to the Lord, and to bear His chastisements; assured that some great good

will be produced by it ; for the rod of chastisement, in the hand of our heavenly Father, is destined to be, and must be, productive of good to His child.

3. The Scriptures on this head do not leave us in the dark ; they tell us what the blessing will be. *Suffering is designed to take away sin.* It does not indeed take away sin in a *meritorious point* of view ; this is the work of God : but as an agent it does ; it is made instrumental in imbittering sin to His family, and in making them grateful for the rod with which He is pleased to visit them. God himself tells us, by the pen of His inspired Prophet, “By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged ; and *this is all the fruit, to take away his sin.*” The Lord has many agents in separating His people from their sins, and He does all things in a manner worthy of Himself ; while He has invariably in view the welfare of His child. Bear then the chastisement of the Lord. It is hard to bear, perhaps, week after week, month after month, year after year ; but it will be well at last : we shall thank Him in heaven for the pains, as well as for the joys, of earth. Now “no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb. xii. 11).

4. *We are destined in our sufferings to be conformed to His Son.* “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” It is a great honour to suffer, because in

suffering we are made more like Christ. Many individuals are enabled by the Lord to rejoice in the midst of their sufferings, and to be grateful for them. Sufferings, moreover, usher in the goodness of God, and are instrumental of much good in His hands. Shimei was suffered to curse David; but a blessing from the Lord followed it. Job, when he had been severely tried, came forth like gold out of the furnace. It is the exclusive prerogative of God to educe good from evil; and this He will do, not in *one single* instance, but in *every* instance in which His family are visited with evil during the period of their sojourning here on earth. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you" (1 Pet. v. 6, 7).

5. To specify the highest good we can derive from them on this side eternity; St. Paul presents us with a most interesting climax in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. He begins by saying, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." And then he goes on, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." *Our*

graces are brought to the test by suffering : without suffering, I do not see how we could learn the weakness of finite being : nor do I see how, without suffering, we could be made intimately acquainted with the power of God in upholding us. This is what the Apostle received from the Lord ; and it is a blessing proffered to all His family : “ My grace is sufficient for thee ; for My strength is made perfect in weakness ” (2 Cor. xii. 9).

In the midst of sufferings, then, think not of your own weakness, but of the strength of God : I believe it might be proved that martyrs, while going to the stake, dwelt more upon the power of God to be given to them for their support through their suffering, than on the sufferings themselves ; and thus they triumphed, in one sense, before they began to suffer.

6. Lastly, *Sufferings try and prove principles* ; they try and prove our faith. “ When I am tried (says holy Job) I shall come forth as gold.” We are much more intimately acquainted with the reality of religion in our own souls when in the furnace of affliction than at other times. It is the will of God that His family should suffer more or less on earth, while His secret will pervades the whole, and guides to the most glorious issue : “ Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations ” (1 Pet. vi. 6, 7) : “ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

II. I am now to consider, THE REVEALED WILL OF GOD. And we are peculiarly interested in this; because it is in studying the *revealed* Will of God, that we learn how to be submissive to His *secret* Will. All that we require to know being contained in the volume of Inspiration,.

Our Lord tells the Jews that they erred, “not knowing the Scriptures” (Mark xii. 24; Matt. xxii. 29). They asked Him many questions, which, had they studied Scripture attentively, they would have been able to solve themselves. Study the Scriptures, my young friends, in your early years. God intended that His family should be well acquainted with His word. Be ambitious of knowing it, and of having your memories well stored with it. Learn some portion every day; consider well its connection, and treasure it in your minds. In doing this, you will arm yourselves against trials and temptations; the truth which lies hid in memory will speak, and that effectually, by borrowing and using the voice of God himself.

We are to learn to discipline our own wills by the will of God. The will of a finite being when it deviates, in the least degree, from the revealed will of God, is in a state of rebellion against Him. I am not now alluding to believers in a state of grace here below; but, to our first parents in Eden, and to angels who fell. There can be no partial deviation from the will of God; it is absolute and entire. When angels fell, they acted according to

their own will, which deviated from the Will of God, and they ruined themselves. Our first parents did the same. Both gave themselves wholly to enmity and rebellion against God : and here, I would observe, that nothing will more effectually destroy the transgressor, than to let him have his own will, his own way. The wisdom of the child of God, then, consists in praying, “ Thy will, not mine, be done,” O my God ! (Ezra vii. 18 ; Matt. xxvi. 39.)

I would now endeavour to assign a few reasons why an humble inquiry into the will of God may prove eminently useful. I do not mean that it is wise curiously to pry into things which God has intentionally concealed from us ; by no means : but to search into every thing He has revealed, which involves in it our own welfare as well as the glory of God in our salvation, must be an imperative duty.

1. *Man's own will destroyed him ;* and it invariably leads its possessor to court destruction. Witness what I have just alluded to in the conduct of angels and our first parents. Witness the conduct of great part of the human race : only observe the conduct of individuals presented to us day after day : all echoes the truth of Scripture, “ O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself ” (Hosea xiii. 9). Man's will produces nothing of itself but his destruction. How wise then, and how benevolent, the prayer, “ *Thy will be done.* ”

2. *Our own will is naturally and perpetually opposed to God.* “ The carnal mind is enmity against God ” (Rom. viii. 7). And why is the will opposed

to God? Because the disposition is opposed to Him; wholly opposed. The will moves according to the disposition; if the disposition were partially good, there would be partial good in the will; but the disposition is wholly evil; and so is the will. We only understand this, when we have been called from the darkness of nature to the light of Gospel truth by the Spirit of the Living God. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. v. 17).

3. Again—and here me, thoughtless sinner! Digest the truth I am going to tell you. *Your own will is invariably opposed to your own salvation.* It not only brings you into a state of destruction, but keeps you there. All your volitions are opposed to a God of mercy. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy" (Rom. ix. 16). And why? Because man wills his own destruction. Our Lord Jesus Christ does not trace the destruction of the Jews to the will of God, but to their own sinful act: "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life" (John v. 40). Their sinfulness and perseverance in sin was traced wholly and exclusively to themselves. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, *and ye would not*" (Matt.

xxiii. 37). Hence the wisdom and benevolence of the prayer, "Thy will be done." It is only the will of God, turning and disciplining the human will, that disposes man to seek, as he ought, the salvation of his own immortal spirit.

4. I would consider *the example of Christ*. "I came down from heaven" (John vi. 38), says our blessed Lord, "not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John v. 30). His Father's will was *His* will continually; His own will was wholly absorbed in that of His Father. What a happiness! What a blessing! To have a will like the Lord Jesus Christ; and to realize this we must be under the influence of the same Spirit; the Spirit of the Father and the Son: the Spirit that rules and reigns in the humanity of Jesus before the throne in glory.

5. Lastly. We have the *command of Jesus*, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself" (Matt. xvi. 24; Luke ix. 23): if any man will come after me, *let him do my will*; that is, let him be influenced not by His own will, but by mine.

III. "*On earth as it is in heaven.*"

1. First, then, it is to be done *zealously*. Oh! the zeal that lives in heaven; we can form no adequate idea of it. There all intellects are fully engaged in adoring the perfections of God. In perusing the love which prompted the Messiah to descend from the summit of glory to the depth of our hell! and their hearts are engaged as ardently: this is the

glory of their worship. This was the case with our first parents, when they came from the hands of God. But it is not so with us. We know far more than we practise. We have more in our heads than in our hearts. We need all of us to be more under the influence of the Spirit of the Living God ; to be more like saints and angels in heaven ! “ Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers *a flame of fire*” (Heb. i. 7), evidently betokening the spirituality and intenseness of their worship. But when we look at the conduct of our Lord *on earth* we find something more interesting to us than the obedience of saints and angels in heaven. Witness the alacrity and delight with which he went to Jerusalem ; he hastened thither on the wings of love to God and man. He went to throw himself into the hands of his enemies that he might humble himself to death, even the death of the cross. Yes, he hasted to throw himself to the bottom of the abyss, in which his family were (I speak correctly, for though an abyss, it was fathomed by Deity): *there* he found them, and thence he raises them to the zenith of glory.

2. This petition involves *prompt* obedience. Wherever affection lives, it always leads to this. Mark the conduct of the obedient child who loves his father ; no sooner are the father's wishes expressed, than they are obeyed. “ I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments ” says the Psalmist (Ps. cxix. 60), who was an eminent type of Christ.

3. It involves *diligence* in obedience to the living

God; uninterrupted service. We do not like to see individuals indolent when engaged in any laudable earthly pursuit. The Psalmist says, "I have diligently kept all thy commandments" (Ps. cxix. 127, 131, 143). Indolence is as strong a proof of hypocrisy and deceit, as diligence is of sincerity and zeal. When we read of those superior beings in heaven who are engaged in worshipping God, and singing "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty," it is added, they "rest not day and night" (Rev. iv. 8), perpetually engaged in the delightful work.

4. If we would be engaged in the service of God as the angels are above, we must act *as in His presence*. He who serves God as he ought, courts His eye continually. May the Lord confer this blessing upon us individually, as it involves the strongest proof of spiritual integrity; and not only so, but a consciousness of that integrity in the bosom of the worshipper himself. It is said of the angels in heaven, those angels who are ministering to the heirs of salvation below, that they are *in the presence* of God, worshipping Him perpetually. The Psalmist gives us a singularly striking example of that true, sublime, *honest*, devotion in which God delights, when he says "I have set the Lord always before me" (Ps. xvi. 8). And how did he view him? With the eye of the intellect exclusively? No; with the eye of his heart; involving what I told you of confession, he threw open his whole heart, and exposed every thing within his bosom to the eye of the Lord. If we do not this, we cannot

enter into the spirit of the prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

5. Our obedience to God's will must necessarily be connected with *the welfare of our fellow-creatures*. Doubtless, angels above are intensely occupied with the service of God. God fills their bosoms continually ; and for this reason, they are most intently occupied with the salvation of sinners. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." It is the love of God ; it is the worship of God, in all His glory, that gives the soul full leisure to attend to every thing that is lovely. Why are the angels so much concerned for our weal, but because they are so intently occupied in the service of God. O may we ever pray for each other, and do to each other all the good we can ; that we may travel like a little band of brethren, towards the Canaan above ; assured that the powers of hell must fall before us, and be eventually trampled under our feet.

But we have a higher example than that of angels ; the example of the Saviour himself ; who was intently occupied in the service of his Father, and at the same time of his brethren also.—Let us imitate him.

To conclude, learn a few lessons.

1. *To lament*, daily to lament, *the evil that is within you*. Thus the Apostle went on, "O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" Some professors of religion, and I am

sorry to say some ministers, seem to talk as if we were to forget sin. If you forget sin, you will most assuredly forget Christ. It is impossible to remember Christ without remembering sin.

2. Connected with this, *rejoice daily in Jesus Christ*. The Apostle tells us with the same breath, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. vii. 25). The Psalmist says, “I have set the Lord always before me” (Ps. xxvi. 3); and not only so, but in another place “my sin is ever before me” (Ps. li. 3). The sins of the Psalmist, and the mercy of God, were continually in his view. Their sins, and the sacrifice for sin, perpetually presented themselves to the minds of the Psalmist and Apostle. May God give us the same feeling, that it may produce in us the same effects. And,

3. We should be ambitious to set a bright example to others. We know that saints of old condemned the world by their conduct. Worldly people will not read the Bible; they will not read what is recorded against them in this book; they will not read the mercies of God, and that he delights in obedience. Be it your care then to present to them, daily, God’s own edition of the Bible; that which He inscribes with His own Spirit on the fleshly tables of the human heart. Oblige them to read this, and make them condemn themselves by your conduct. It is said of the infant church, in the Acts of the Apostles, while they were walking in the fear of the Lord, that the loveliness of their deportment attracted the attention of others, and the Lord added to the church those who were

destined to be saved ; *their* lovely deportment was blessed : follow ye then their holy example.

4. We should pray that God would carry on to perfection, in our bosoms, the work of His own hands. Nor would I forget that there is a blissful period to arrive, when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord : a period is coming, when God will be served on earth ; with much of that holy fire with which He is served in heaven. Yes ; Messiah is promised to reign ; and reign He will, most gloriously. Then, and not till then, will mankind witness the dissolution of every evil in principle, and of all vice in practice. Amen.

SERMON VII.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 11.

Give us this day our daily bread.

THE more we meditate on this prayer, the more we shall discover its excellencies ; evincing, as it does in the clearest manner, that it flows from the bosom, and from the lips, of Him who is God.

Infidelity is in one respect a very formidable, and in an other point of view a very contemptible, enemy ; formidable indeed to those who will not honestly peruse the volume of inspiration ; formidable indeed to those who are determined to follow the bent of their own corrupt dispositions ; for corruption in the heart darkens the intellect, and makes the individual, who is the slave of his passions an easy victim of error in principle, as well as of vice in practice.

On the other hand, infidelity is an enemy that is contemptible in the extreme, to one whose ears are opened to listen to the voice of God. As soon as the spiritual eye of man is open to behold the glory of revelation, he stands no more in need

of the external evidences of Christianity, than he does of the aid of the optician or the astronomer, to prove that the sun is in the firmament of heaven, when his eye is enjoying its glories.

There is one thing peculiarly interesting in this prayer, and which pervades the whole. It flows from all the sympathy of the Saviour as man, as well as from all his love as God. He did not stand in need of mercy as we do; but he stood in need of daily bread, and was as dependent upon his Father for it as we are. We find that now and then, he deprived himself for a season so completely of the things of time and sense, that he was dependent on his own creatures for subsistence: The richest in heaven and the poorest on earth (2 Cor. viii. 9) at the same moment! May we keep this in view while we are dwelling on the interesting truth in the text.

One perfection, among countless others in the Saviour, was this; that he never cherished an idea of receiving any thing but at the hands of his God. The Independent from eternity became in time as dependent as any of his own family; and this is another thing to be considered in the exquisite sympathy of Messiah. He fed the universe himself. His hand was stretched forth in conferring blessings on all; while at the same time he was dependent on his own family for daily food.

“ Give us this day our daily bread.”

I. Consider THE BLESSING, “ *bread* ;” and,

1. First of all, It is the *gift of God*. Every thing that is good is universally the gift of God. Every thing, of every kind, in every degree: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above" (James i. 17). "God giveth to all, life, and breath, and all things" (Acts xvii. 25). All things which all worlds receive, at the hands of God are His ceaseless gift. But the bread we eat is to be considered in another point of view: it is not only the gift of God, but His gift to us, in infinite worth.

2. The daily bread we eat is *purchased by the blood of Immanuel*. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name," says our blessed Lord, "He will give it you" (John xvi. 23); and for this obvious reason, all things, all the blessings of time as well as those of eternity, are the purchase of a sacrifice; of that sacrifice which was once offered on Calvary. With what an interesting truth does this present us. Our tables are daily spread not only by the hand of a benevolent and beneficent God, but at the expense of Heaven. All the wealth of Heaven is daily presented to us in the food we eat, and in the water we drink. The idea of receiving every thing fully and freely from the hand of God must have given an exquisite zest to all that our first parents enjoyed in Eden. In the food they ate, and in the water they drank, (I shall not express myself too strongly if I say) they tasted God. His goodness sweetened every thing. God intended that all we eat and all we drink should perpetually remind us of His love in giving His Son to die for us. Every

thing is purchased for us by Jesus Christ. We have forfeited every thing by sin and forfeited every thing for ever. The whole world was given to Adam, and he was made monarch of all ; but he lost it in a very short time. Jesus Christ has purchased the whole to bestow it upon His own family : " The meek shall inherit the earth " (Matt. v. 5). Oh that the thoughtless sons and daughters of Adam would take this truth into consideration.

We cannot do justice to our bodies without first doing justice to our souls. And indeed we find that the wicked in reality neglect both. It was intended that in all things we should keep the Lord Jesus Christ perpetually in view. God grant that we may be enabled to do it, looking to Him for every thing we need while we are inhabitants of time, and to receive all at His hands as earnest and pledges of a blissful eternity.

But, alas ! alas ! if we look abroad into the world, as we are obliged to do daily, we cannot live without witnessing in a thousand instances how the things of time and sense are abused. God the giver is forgotten ; Christ the purchaser is forgotten ; the body that is to be redeemed, and the soul that is to be saved, all, all are forgotten.

You will find too that this criminal thoughtlessness pervades every thing. Look at some who would fain be thought religious : they attend a place of worship once on the Sabbath ; but they can go without any spiritual food the rest of the day, and the whole of the week. On Sunday evening they are too busily occupied to

worship God, their spiritual appetites are very different to their common ones. What in their estimation is the best sermon that ever was preached on a Sunday evening, in comparison with rich dinners and fine wines? Instead of receiving every thing as a gift from the hands of God for the sake of His Son, in the light of that to which I have just alluded, read the pages of Scripture, and you will find that in every thing they are courting the curse of God; they are courting the vengeance of God perpetually.

It was evidently intended that temporal blessings and spiritual blessings should be connected together; for in reality, we cannot receive one at the hand of God without receiving all.

I offer now to your consideration a few reasons why we should use the prayer.

1. "Give *us* this day *our* daily bread."

Not individually *my* daily bread; by no means: "Me" and "My" enter exclusively into the language of unregenerate man; of man as he is, a sinner. Man's transgression has made him exclusively a selfish being. Self is his idol, and is primarily and perpetually in his view. Read the history of mankind before the introduction of Christianity, and you will not want awful proof of this. It must ever be remembered that the sublime morals taught in the Christian religion have had a very happy effect, in some respects, on many who never received their spirituality.

"Give us this day our daily bread." The perfection of God's Gospel involves in it the perfection

of His Law. The law when it originally emanated from God, required that man should love his neighbour as himself, and for the best of all reasons; they equally occupy the same scale in existence: they are the creation of the same God; they are equally dear to Him; and the very nature of things requires that each should love each, as each loves himself, in the state of discipline in which we are placed at the present moment preparatory to the perfection of heaven.

2. "*Our*" bread—not "*my*" bread—teaching us that it is impossible for us to pray honestly for ourselves individually without praying for ourselves collectively; without praying for each other as brethren and sisters in the Lord. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. ii. 4). The Law requires this love as a duty; the Gospel confers it as a blessing: so that, evidently in the hearts of God's believing people, all the glories of the Law, and all the blessings of the Gospel, are destined to live eternally involved in each other.

II. Secondly, we are to pray, "*Give* us this day our *daily* bread;" to teach us, first, that our daily labour does not purchase any thing at the hands of God. If a finite being were to labour for millions of ages, he would never merit any thing at the hands of God; all the pure spotless obedience of the angelic hosts, has never merited any thing at the hands of God! Listen, Socinians! I must give you your own deserts, (for I dare not flatter you,) you will receive them from the hand of God Himself in a very short time. The Sa-

viour must be one who is capable of purchasing at the hands of God. Finite beings can never be His creditors, they must remain His debtors for ever. And this is in perfect union with the language of all those who know themselves. Hear what the ancient Patriarch says; "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant" (Gen. xxxii. 11); not worthy of the *least*, then certainly not worthy of the greatest.

2. Secondly, "*Give us this day our daily bread,*" to teach us particularly that we have no right to any thing; no right even to ourselves, but as the ceaseless gift of God in Christ. We are taught this again and again, in Scripture; and, if disciplined by the Divine Spirit, our own experience must fully echo the voice of inspiration. "The gold is mine, and the silver is mine" (Hagg. ii. 8), saith the Lord, "and the cattle upon a thousand hills" (Ps. l. 10). "Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, is the Lord's thy God; the earth also, with all that therein is" (Deut. x. 14). Every thing is His.

3. Thirdly, We pray for our daily bread, that we may be daily blessed in the use and enjoyment of all the mercies which God is pleased to confer upon us. Hear the promise which comes from His own lips respecting His church: "I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread" (Ps. cxxxii. 15). "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. iv. 5).

III. To consider the emphatical meaning of "Bread."

1. Consider this, first, as emblematic and symbolical of Him who is the Bread of Life, and of those spiritual blessings which are destined to keep the soul alive for ever and ever, and eventually the body, after its re-union with the immortal spirit. "I am the living bread which came down from Heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John vi. 51). We cannot pray for the bread which perisheth, unless we pray likewise, for Him who is the bread of life. God will not hear our prayers for daily bread, unless we pray, first of all, for that bread which endureth to everlasting life. God will not give the least of His gifts to any, with a blessing upon it, without giving the greatest. He gives nothing that is truly and permanently good to any one, without first giving Himself. The bread of life, in the first place; and then, that which is necessary to support our frail bodies.

2. Secondly. The term "bread" is used as it implies every thing that is necessary for the support of the bodily frame. "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread (or food) to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink" (Prov. xxv. 21).

3. Thirdly. The term "bread" is used because it was evidently the intention of God to teach us simplicity and temperance in the use of all earthly things. The simplicity and temperance I am speaking of at the present moment, necessarily involve in them the welfare of body and mind. When is the intellect

most clear? When under the influence of temperance. When are the fine feelings of the human heart in their highest exercise? When under the influence of temperance. Where does God himself deign to fix His throne? In the bosom of the temperate, not of the intemperate. True wisdom, as we shall see toward the conclusion of my discourse, would lead us perpetually, in seeking at the hand of God what is necessary for our support, to seek also the welfare of the immortal spirit, involving as it does in the highest degree the welfare of the body, which is destined to perish. "Having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. vi. 8).

IV. Fourthly, and lastly. We are to pray *daily*, for *daily* bread.

First, To keep alive a spirit of devotion in the human heart, and to teach us in the use of every thing herebelow, to keep up a daily intercourse with Heaven. Oh! my friends, when I think of the spirituality and glory of that holy religion, a minister of which I am (although the most unworthy), I am sometimes trembling in this pulpit, lest I should sink out of it into hell. Do I keep all these truths in view as I ought? Do I think of God and of souls as I ought? Alas! alas! I too often fail of my duty. But there follows another portion of this prayer, "forgive us our trespasses:" when I think of this my heart is cheered; and when I call to mind that there is an Advocate above who once bore the sins of his family in his own body on the tree here below,

and who still bears them in his intercession before the Throne above ; then do I take courage, and go forward.

God likes to hear the prayer of His people. God delights more in intercourse with believing sinners here below, than in intercourse with the angels above. He wishes to hear the voice of His people : this is the reason why he often visits them with severe chastisements, that they may pray to Him : “men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke xviii. 1). They ought to ask God for every thing ; and tremble at the idea of receiving any thing from His hands but in Jesus Christ.

2. Secondly, “ Give us this day our daily bread,” to teach us to be fully satisfied with a present supply, that we may dismiss all corroding cares as to futurity; and in this respect, as well as in many others, Scripture recommends to our attention the simplicity of children. “Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matt. vi. 34). It is in this childlike simplicity of which I am speaking, that the Lord imparts energy to His family to bear every afflictive dispensation. When they meet with the evils of the day, they too often connect them with the evils of to-morrow, in many cases imaginary evils, and they sink under the load; and no wonder, for they take upon their shoulders a forbidden load. *To-morrow is the care of God ; to-day* is what you have to think of: and I charge you that you make it a subject of prayer

to the Lord that you may live without thinking of to-morrow. This seems to be absolutely necessary to give the mind that elasticity and rich leisure, which are requisite to enable it to carry on a ceaseless intercourse with heaven, and with the God of heaven and earth. Oh! my brethren, how many things have frightened us which were exclusively the creatures of our own imagination; but though imaginary, there have been often real and serious evils emanating from them. We have weakened our own souls, we gave our spiritual adversaries the advantage over us; we suffered them to range themselves in battle-array against us between our covenant God and ourselves. May God grant that this may never be the case in future!

3. Again, we are to pray for daily bread to keep us in daily preparation for death. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Prov. xxvii. 1). In my humble judgment, it is unlawful to pray "give me *to-morrow* my bread;" for this reason, *to-night I may die*. If I am truly wise, I shall pray only for this day; and if God give me the rest of my time, I can then devote it to Him.

4. Again, we are to pray "Give us this day our daily bread," to teach us to live honestly, and to eat the fruit of our own labour. Oh how far is he removed from dishonesty who trusts his God. Dishonesty is removed to the distance of Infinity and Eternity from Him. In the midst of thousands of gold and silver, in the midst of every temptation to

which he can be exposed, he will have nothing but what God Himself presents to him; and therefore, depending on the truth of God, he honours His commandment, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Rom. xii. 17). To what is dishonesty frequently to be traced? To unbelief; the monarch sin of men and devils. Would individuals have been guilty of stealing, if they had been taught to pray to God, and to trust in Him? By no means.

5. Fifthly. We are to pray for daily bread, to teach us industry in our respective callings, trades, and professions; but first of all, and above all, spiritual industry: for he who is most industrious at a Throne of Grace will be most industrious every where else, both in things temporal and spiritual. "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" (Rom. xii. 11). Idleness is a dreadful snare to man, no one but God himself knows what it has done; it is inhabited by (if I may so speak) ten thousand enemies to the human body as well as the human soul.

From this subject, learn,

1. Not to envy those who neither work nor pray, and yet have abundance given to them. God is a Sovereign, and may give, if He please, to His enemies; though He will bring them to an awful account at last. But, in the blessings of Providence we see God delights in imparting every good to His creatures; and why do we not receive more? Because we do not know how to acknowledge the hand of God in the blessings of His providence; if men

were wise and prudent, they would see that He invites them to Himself by these means. I have His own authority for this: “Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Rom. ii. 4.) This is its immediate tendency. To say that man’s corrupt propensities militate against this, does not invalidate the truth itself in the least degree. “But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, *treasurest up unto thyself* wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Rom. ii. 5).

Those who have an independent fortune, if wise and temperate in the use of the things of time, have the richest leisure to scrutinize the book of God; to examine its invaluable contents, and to compare it with what passes in their own minds. All excuses on the score of disabilities will avail nothing in the last day. There are a thousand things which men omit to do, and which they certainly might do.

2. Let the poor learn patience, submission, and gratitude, in an humble sphere of life. Man is prone to abuse every thing: this seems to be the reason why the Lord, for the most part, keeps His own family in humble situations in life. “A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle” (Matt. xix. 23, 24). But all the difficulties inhabit his own bosom: if disposed to part with his sins, no obstacle would present itself; he might

then very easily enter in. If disposed to part with the things that God has given him? No, my brother, only with the abuse of what God has given him ; there will then be no greater difficulty in his way than in the way of a poor man.

3. Let the rich learn to impart to the poor, and thus imitate God. "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord " (Prov. xix. 17). You to whom the Lord has given the things of time and sense, be liberal. Remember God has given these things to you as *treasurers* ; they never were your own, and cannot be exclusively your own ; they are as much the Lord's now as they were before. He gave you these blessings (for blessings they certainly are). Live to God ; and receive them as from His hands, and thus you will make the best use of them. But woe to those who hoard up money, and worship a golden god. Some one has observed, that " money is like manure, it does no good till it is spread." Oh that many who are rich, but whom we cannot consider in the judgment of charity as liberal, were more alive to the high honour of giving money as much as they can, every day, to the glory of God ; and to promote the best interests of their fellow-men.

4. We are emphatically taught here not to seek superfluities at the hand of God, but only necessities. We are forbidden to do this. "Give us this day our *daily bread*." Need I remind you of the prayer of an eminently holy man? "Two things have I required of thee : deny me them not

before I die : remove far from me vanity and lies ; give me neither poverty nor riches ; feed me with food convenient for me : lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord ? Or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain ” (Prov. xxx. 7—9). Is not this book from above ? Most assuredly. Where does this spirit come from ? From the Author of the prayer whence I took my text : it is a faithful record of the truth I am now maintaining.

Lastly, and to conclude, Let daily prayer be crowned with daily praise. There is something defective in our prayers, when they do not lead us on to praise. One striking proof that God answers prayer is, that the individual who is blessed with the answer praises the Lord. “When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God ” (Deut. viii. 10 ; Isa. lxii. 9). Praise Him for every thing ; not only for spiritual blessings, but for temporal blessings likewise. Praise Him for every thing that descends from heaven to earth, in the Son of His love, Jesus Christ. Receive all things at the hands of God in him, and let every thing ascend from you to God through him. If we do justice then to what I have stated, it follows clearly, that we cannot eat and drink as we ought without involving in it an act of worship : it follows, that we cannot eat and drink as we ought, without rejoicing in the Lord our Saviour ; that we cannot do it acceptably without praising Him while the

food is in our mouths. True religion leads to this. May it lead *us* to this!

Suffer no sense of past unworthiness to deter you from praising the Lord. The highest honours are reserved for those who have been most unworthy, when they come to God to solicit them freely at His hands. God intended that we should praise Him in all the relationships of time and sense. Though we may not attain to perfection, yet let us keep perfection perpetually in view at all times, and in all places; that in whatsoever we may be engaged, wheresoever we may be going, whatever we may be doing, we may have the glory of God always in view. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31). This, my brethren, will do more for the body, as well as for the soul, than all the physicians in the kingdom. The joy of the Lord is not only medicine for the soul, but for the body likewise. Oh may we know what it is to appreciate the things of time and sense, by considering them as the purchase of the blood of Immanuel; and may we never presume to lay our hand upon any thing, unless we see the hand of God stretched out, and presenting us with it in the Son of His love Jesus Christ! This is the spirit of true Christianity: God grant that we may live and die under its holy and blissful influence! that we may ascend from earth to heaven, leaving behind all that is earthly; to live without eating, to live without drinking, to live

without sleeping, to live without being weary ; to live, my brethren, eternally with God Himself, our spiritual food ; without the intervention of any thing between us and Himself ; to drink of His glory for ever, with all the faculties of the human intellect, and with all the energies of the human heart.

SERMON VIII.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 12.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

THERE is more than conviction in the religion of Jesus Christ. The devil is convinced of its truth, but not conscious of its excellency. We should endeavour to ascend above conviction, and while here on earth be as much like the angels as possible : we should seek to be conscious of it.

“ *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*” Infinite Wisdom has connected this part of the Lord's Prayer with that which immediately precedes it, “ Give us this day our daily bread ;” and then, “ forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors ;” for these evident reasons :—

1. Because daily bread and daily water would be a daily curse without the forgiveness of God. When I look abroad into the world, I could call it the Bedlam of sin and Satan ; and such it would be without a Physician. Thanks be to God, He Himself is its Physician.

Those who eat their daily bread, and drink their

daily water, without the mercy of God, are eating and drinking inflammables for hell itself. I could prove this with the most lucid arguments, would time permit. As soon as the soul leaves the body, the breath of the Almighty will kindle the whole into one eternal fire.

The influence of sin is beyond the calculation of any finite being. Sin has bartered the human soul. Man is as insensible of the presence of God, and as regardless of it, as if he were a stock or a stone. The brute creation reproach him perpetually : the dog approaches his benefactor with love and gratitude in his eyes; while the language of his heart seems to be, ‘ I will lay down my life for you whenever you please.’

If we cast our eyes over this thoughtless world, where God is forgotten, even in the midst of all the courtesies of life ; we witness nothing but what is destined to be eternal fuel for the flames of hell.

Are any of you, my brethren, living in this way ; receiving, or rather stealing every thing from the hands of God ; returning nothing to Him in love and gratitude. Let me ask you, is it consistent with His perfections that you should be suffered to go on thus for ever ? Is it consistent with the well-being of civil society, that individuals who violate the law of the land, and disturb the peace of the community should go on without punishment ? No, *God himself must be unrighteous if he does not punish you.* This is not too strong language : I have weighed it well, and it is necessary to speak thus, to awaken individuals from their sleep of death ; while they are

dreaming of mercy, and know nothing of their need of it.

2. Daily impenitence provokes God to hide His face even from His own family. Some persons have an idea, that if once introduced into the family of God, God cannot be angry with them. My brethren, perhaps I am correct in saying, that in one sense God is more angry with His own family than with the devil himself. Is this anger consistent with His love? some may ask. Is the anger of an affectionate father consistent with *his* love? Most assuredly? And perhaps when His anger descends, we find more love in His chastisements than in any thing else; God seems to complain of His own family when He says, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you that He will not hear" (Isa. lix. 2). Daily mercy then is absolutely necessary, otherwise our daily food cannot be a blessing to us: we are indeed forgiven by God; but we stand in need of daily forgiveness at His hands as a parent, till sin ceases to be in us.

I. Of sin as a DEBT.

In speaking of sins as Debts, we must remember, that they are not to be considered so exclusively; but that God in his word addresses us precisely as we address each other: all the figures, all the metaphors we use are used by God. He condescends to address us in our own imperfect dialect, and speaks the language which we speak to each other. Sins are called debts, because by transgression we incur debt. All

beings are debtors to God, and will be so for ever. All the hosts of heaven owe to Him a debt of obedience; it is a universal truth; not excepting the humanity of Jesus Christ himself, which owes a debt of obedience, and will for ever owe it. This is evident; for, as a *finite* and dependent being, his humanity must owe love and obedience to his heavenly Father. As I have told you before, he is the first of subjects, as well as the first of kings.

Man by transgression incurred a twofold debt. In a state of innocence, he was a debtor to the command: in a state of sin, he is a debtor to the curse, as well as the command.

My dear brethren, are any of you determined to live and die the slaves of sin and Satan? Are any of you determined to open and close upon yourselves, your own prison doors? then, let me tell you the awful truth; you will be *debtors eternally* to the command and curse of God: you will owe Him all the perfection of the obedience of heaven: and more than all the miseries of hell; for finite being cannot comprise the punishment due to transgression.

If men knew what death is, or rather into what state it ushers the transgressor, they would not leap down the precipice of eternity into such an abyss of sin and misery.

The state of the wicked is too awful to be dwelt upon exclusively: it must be dwelt upon in connection with the love of God; that the sinner may be not only convinced of his misery, but of the removal of his sins: sins both of omission and commission.

Though we evidently see something of a legal spirit in Job, yet, on the whole, he was an humble pious man. When the provocations of his friends assailed him, then the evil of his heart appeared. We discover his imperfection; yet he was strikingly honest, and his integrity deserves imitation. Listen to what he says, "how should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand" (Job ix. 3). And again, speaking of sins of commission, Job says, "How many are mine iniquities and sins: make me to know my transgression and my sin" (Job xxxiv. 32). This was the prayer of *honest* Job.

All things are conferred upon us by God; we are indebted to God for them: they are to be considered as so many talents; yes, ourselves and all our faculties, body, soul, spirit. Our learning (if we have any), our skill in science (if we are scientific), our health, our money, all—all to be given to God; and if this be not done, we are contracting debts every moment. We do not know what riches are, till we give them to God.

I remember a most generous father, who loved his child dearly, and used to give him a great deal of money; but he was sadly afraid lest his child should be a miser, so he used to say to him, 'Don't mind spending your money, I will take care you shall have money enough; only let me know what you do with it, I will supply you.' O that we knew how to trust the Lord; if we do not, we are impoverishing our own souls. We do not do justice to God; to His

holy religion, till every connection with earth is involved in our intercourse with heaven.

II. God is merciful to sinners, in and for the sake of His Son Jesus Christ. And it is consistent with the Divine perfections that He should be so, for the following reasons.

1. First. Christ was punished for us. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. liii. 5).

2. He is the only sacrifice for sin, a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour: there is nothing like a sacrifice for sin, but the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Infinity and Eternity are absolutely necessary to constitute a sacrifice for sin; and in Christ, we find Infinity and Eternity in humanity like our own (sin only excepted), presenting the Father with a sacrifice.

3. He shed his blood to cleanse us from all our sin. The fountain opened on Calvary, infinitely rich in merit, will continue to flow to eternity, laden with all the blessings of heaven; with God Himself, with all that God can bestow upon His family. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7); this is our comfort, consolation, and triumph.

4. In and through Jesus Christ we are reconciled to God. He is reconciled to us, by the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ. We are reconciled to

Him by the sprinkling of His blood on the conscience (2 Cor. v. 18, 19). Reconciliation comprises the work of the Spirit, as well as the work of the Saviour. You see I am here reprobating the doctrine of forgiveness before we believe in Jesus Christ; it is only a new edition of that old error, Justification from eternity. Repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, are the operation of the Holy Spirit, flowing from the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ and issuing in the glory of God, as a Legislator as well as a Sovereign; for God is a spiritual Governor, as well as a Sovereign Dispenser of blessings.

5. The Saviour by His obedience unto death purchased every thing for us. We ourselves are a purchase. Every temporal and spiritual good we receive at the hands of God is the purchase of the death of Christ. It is for this reason that Jesus commands his disciples to pray in his name, and promises that every thing they ask in his name shall be given to them.

Having spoken of the blessings of mercy as purchased by the death of Christ, I would enumerate a few of them.

1. Peace with God—perfect peace—eternal peace. God is as much at peace (in one respect) with His family here below, as He is with angels above. Yes, my brethren; and even more so. I wish to express myself as strongly as I can; because I am conscious that I stand on Scripture ground, and that this is truth. Hear me, then, and treasure the truth in your memories: there is a sense in which

God is as much reconciled to His family here below, in the midst of their imperfections, as He is to His saints in heaven. It is necessary to state this ; for some believers are so deeply exercised, so plagued with a corrupt heart, that they stand in need of these consolations. Hear what St. Paul says : “ If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son ; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life ” (Rom. v. 10).

2. Justification. He that believeth is justified from all things : this is the testimony of Scripture (Acts xiii. 39) : no charge can be made good against him, not one ; it is absolutely impossible.

Let us suppose an individual confined in prison for a debt : a friend cancels the debt ; can any demand be made upon that individual ? Can he be kept in prison ? Assuredly not.

The believer is as free from the curse of the law, as Christ himself is. Some may perhaps be disposed to say, You are going too far. No, my friends ; but if I preached this *exclusively*, I should not be going far enough. I pray that God may crown with success my endeavours to preach the whole of what I find in the Bible : truth will then appear in all its glory, beauty, and symmetry ; and none can possibly abuse it, but those who are determined to do it, and do it wilfully.

3. Another blessing we receive is, Adoption. “ As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name ” (John i. 12).

4. Freedom of access to the presence of the Almighty. Are we welcome to the presence of the King of kings? Yes: not an angel in heaven more welcome than we. I do not think I should err, if I were to say that the believer is more welcome; and for this reason; he is more nearly related to the Son of God, Jesus Christ. "Boldness," "freedom," "confidence;" these are the words used by St. Paul when speaking of the believer's access to God.

5. Consolation in the midst of every earthly calamity. Perhaps some of you have noticed what Jesus said to an afflicted individual. Let me read the passage: "And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matt. ix. 2). Every blessing follows in the train of mercy.

We must suppose this individual to have understood that he who addressed him was the Son of God; he must have done this, and Jesus must have given him His Holy Spirit to receive the blessing; otherwise the blessing could not have reached him: and when our Saviour speaks, the blessings he would impart must reach their destination. Mark then the consequences: health of body, as well as health of soul. When the Israelites had offended the Lord, Moses approached Him with one word, 'Mercy.' He knew that, if successful, every other blessing would follow. The great consolation is this; if my sin be forgiven, then I may rejoice and be glad in the midst of every calamity: heaven is mine, every good that I am capable of

receiving is mine; and with whatever afflictions I may be visited, while I am a stranger and pilgrim here below, they will be only "blessings in disguise."

6. Another blessing involved in the mercy of God, is triumph over the fear of death. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. xv. 55).

7. And lastly, God Himself, as a portion and inheritance for ever and ever. Doubtless, there is a place where the Saviour is at the present moment surrounded by his saints and angels; but we form a very inadequate and incorrect idea of heaven, if we confine it to a place. The believer is the heir of God. God Himself is his portion and inheritance for ever. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 17).

III. I am now to consider the attributes of that disposition which does justice to the mercy of God in Christ.

1. Penitence. Mercy makes penitent, and keeps penitent. Mercy is not only the parent, but the nurse of true penitence. Need I tell you that a child loves its mother, and loves the food provided for its sustenance? — Nothing but penitence can prize the mercy of God. Judge yourselves then this evening. Do you delight in the

mercy of God? This is the strongest proof of real penitence; penitence never fixes its abode in the human bosom, till it delights in the mercy of God. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him; in those that hope in His mercy" (Psal. cxlvii. 11). Shew me an individual who delights in the mercy of God, and I will shew you one whose heart has been broken by genuine repentance. Until mercy is known, penitence is but partial and very imperfect.

2. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour. All who believe are justified from all things. Faith in Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary; and penitence and faith are indissolubly connected together; they proceed from the same principle, and that principle the offspring of the Divine Spirit.

3. The yoke of obedience is prized; it was prized by Christ himself above every thing else. He took upon himself two yokes; the yoke of the curse, and the yoke of the command. He annihilated the former, that the latter might be an easy yoke for His followers for ever: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. xi. 29, 30): light, because he has taken from it the whole of the curse. It was a heavy yoke indeed to him; but it is light to us; so light, that it furnishes us with wings, with which to ascend from earth to heaven; so light, that it is lighter than any of the elements, and ascends above them all.

4. Peace with all men. That disposition which

prizes mercy delights in peace : “ Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord ” (Heb. xii. 14).

5. It delights to extend forgiveness to others. The Saviour says, “ For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”

IV. Consider the attributes of what I may justly call a merciful disposition.

1. It is opposed to a vindictive spirit ; it is its mortal enemy. “ Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves ; but rather give place unto wrath ; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord ” (Rom. xii. 19). There is a great deal of folly in a vindictive spirit ; as it respects the law of the land, as members of civil society, we are not permitted to avenge ourselves. It is a disgrace to a man, as a member of civil society, to take the law into his own hands. A man is, generally speaking, and especially when under the influence of sin, a very bad judge in his own cause.—But to consider the subject in another point of view : The command is given, “ Avenge not yourselves.” We do not know what sin fully is ; we do not know what is due to it. No one but God does ; and therefore no one but God can visit sin. Those who govern in the world visit sins ; but only externally, and only in some respects : God is the eternal Judge ; and vengeance is His. Let this truth be fully considered ; and you will not find that any of the Old-Testament saints cherished a vindictive disposition. All that can be

said of the frequent allusions to the destruction of enemies, in the Psalms, is this; that they are a perfect transfer of the enemy into the hands of God: and this will always be the case with him who is under the influence of true religion; he consigns his enemy to God: in so doing he does what is well pleasing to God; and there is nothing in it that militates against a merciful disposition.

2. A merciful disposition prays that the enemy may not only be forgiven, but converted. "I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. v. 44).

3. A merciful disposition delights to visit an enemy with every possible good; a merciful disposition delights in the mercy of God, and in being like God. God first loved us when we were enemies. God beheld us in a state of enmity, when He entered into the covenant of eternity, when He sent His Son to die for us. He beholds us in a state of enmity when He sends His Holy Spirit to renew us in the spirit of our minds. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink" (Rom. xii. 20); that is, visit him with mercy as God has visited you.

V. Consider some MOTIVES to be merciful.

1. Our sins against God are infinitely more than our sins against each other. Every sin committed by a brother or a child involves in it a greater evil than that committed by a stranger. We are all the

children of God ; God is primarily insulted, and that in the highest degree, by transgression. But could we calculate the number and aggravation of our sins against God, we should have no time to think of the offences we have received from each other ; we should be much better employed in confessing our transgressions against God.

2. Consider how often we have offended and injured each other. Solomon was one who knew human nature probably as well as any man that ever lived ; he had an opportunity of reading himself as well as others. When we hear any speak ill of us we should remember what he says ; “ Take no heed unto the words that are spoken ; for oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others ” (Eccles. vii. 21, 22). Here you see he sends us into the recesses of our own bosoms. It is wise, my brethren, to view every truth in all its interesting bearings, that it may descend upon us in all its mighty weight, to impress upon our hearts the image of God Himself.

3. We should consider God’s mercy to us ; and this, and this *only*, will be effectual ; nothing less will subdue the heart of man, and dispose him to be merciful to his fellow-creatures (Col. iii. 13). The mercy of God will break his heart, and teach and dispose him to forgive his bitterest enemy. As an impenitent disposition cannot receive the mercy of God ; so neither can an unforgiving disposition receive it. We are invariably disposed to impart and communicate mercy to our brethren, as we are dis-

posed to receive mercy at the hands of God. This is what is involved in that text ; “ He hath shewed thee, Oman, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ” (Mic. vi. 8).

4. Another reason why we should cherish a merciful disposition, is, that it will conduce to our own peace of mind.

Peace cannot inhabit an unmerciful bosom. Peace cannot live there ; it is impossible. I have often reminded you, that true religion in one respect involves in it a principle of self-love ; and God intended that it should. Shew me an individual who is not disposed to be merciful to others, and I will shew you one who is not merciful to himself : there is war in his own bosom, if there be enmity against his brother.

5. Consider the prayer of the unmerciful. This is the prayer of the merciful individual, “ And forgive *us our* trespasses, *as* we forgive them that trespass against us.” The prayer of an unmerciful man is, ‘ Do not forgive me, I will not forgive them : send me to hell, as I wish to send my brother to hell : ’ this is the language of his heart ; he may not be able to interpret it himself, but I have felt it to be my duty, as a minister of the Gospel, to interpret it for him. He spurns a God of Mercy : the language of his heart, fully and faithfully interpreted, is, “ Depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of thy ways ; ” I will not have thy mercy.

To conclude, with a few lessons.—

1. Learn humility, from a consciousness of daily sin: this is the lesson God himself intended that we should learn. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John i. 8, 9).

2. Learn to pity and to pray for those who talk of perfection in this life. One thing is evident: they know very little of themselves; very little of the law of God; very little of the Gospel of God; or they could not talk of perfection. An eminent Divine has said, “There is more corruption than grace in the heart of the most eminent saint under heaven;” I do believe it. May God of his infinite goodness and mercy arm us with Himself, against ourselves: and remember, for your encouragement, that a little grace, inspired by God, is stronger than strong corruption.

3. Learn to bless God for daily forgiveness. Let daily forgiveness be the source of daily praise. God is not weary of forgiveness; let us not be weary of praise.

4. Let us daily pray for a merciful disposition. May this be our ceaseless prayer. It is not enough that we should pray for the establishment of principle in the heart; but, for the development of that principle in the life.

5. Lastly, Pray daily for an increase of faith. We have an interesting example left us on record: our Lord says to his disciples, “Take heed to your-

selves : if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him ; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day, turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him. And the Apostles said unto the Lord, increase our faith." (Luke xvii. 3, &c.) O wise disciples ! Sometimes, indeed, they were foolish ; but on this occasion they were wise. They felt the weight of what their Lord and Master told them, and immediately prayed, " Lord, increase our faith," that we may honour thy command by obedience.

SERMON IX.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 13.

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us
from evil.*

THE connection between one part and another of this prayer, is singularly striking : one thing necessarily and sweetly flows from another. The prayer immediately preceding my text is this, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;" and then connected with it, as if all the attributes of Deity are to be displayed in all their glory, the text is introduced.

The mercy of God was intended to deliver man from sin in the most comprehensive manner. If it did not effect this, it could not possibly be mercy : if it did not accomplish this effectually and eternally, it would not be mercy, but cruelty. "Forgive us our debts," justify us from every charge ; and this, of course must involve in it, dispose us to love and worship thee. We are forgiven, and we are justified ; we are changed from being the voluntary slaves of sin and Satan, into the sons and daughters of the living God.

Need I give you the history of the poor cripple at the waters of Siloam, who after having been healed by an Almighty Physician, was thus addressed by him : "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John v. 14). If we avoid sin, we effectually avoid every thing that is evil ; if we expose ourselves to sin, we expose ourselves to all that is evil : to many evils and dangers in time, and to more in eternity.

"Lead us not into temptation." Lead us not *by thy providence* into temptation ; and suffer us not to be led into temptation by any enemy.

Temptations may be considered as coming either from God or from the arch-enemy of God and man. The temptations of God strictly involve in them no more than a trial of principle. The temptations of Satan involve in them the infusion of moral evil into the human mind : *this* is the difference. I would then consider,

I. Temptation as coming from God.

The Israelites were tempted ; I mean, they were proved by the Almighty, by a variety of His dispensations. The Lord says, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness ; to humble thee, and to prove thee ; to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep His commandments or not" (Deut. viii. 2). In their history, we read our own. If you wish to form an accurate idea of the rebellion of the Israelites in the wilder-

ness, read your own hearts with accuracy, and there you will find it all.

1. The Lord tries His family by *His mercies*.

He does so at the present time. Consider the multitude of mercies, of temporal mercies, which He confers upon them; I defy any finite mind to number them. But, remember, you will have to answer at the day of judgment for them; you will be answerable to God for using or abusing any, or all, of His mercies. He rained manna from heaven on the Israelites; but what did He receive in return? Love and gratitude? By no means; enmity, alas! and rebellion against Him pervade their conduct. And may we not apply this to ourselves, when we consider all that God has done for us in a temporal, as well as a spiritual, point of view? And what has He received at our hands? When we take a retrospective view of the whole tenor of our lives, we find more hatred than love; more ingratitude than gratitude. If we had treated any of our fellow-creatures as we have treated God, we should have been spurned from them, and driven as ungrateful wretches from their doors; but, thanks be to God! He has not yet spurned us from Him; and we bless His holy Name for the means He has devised for conferring on us everlasting salvation.

2. He proves man by *His judgments*. He proves him by affliction: and very often the afflictions, with which men are individually visited, are the offspring of their own sins and iniquities. This does not tend in the least degree to alleviate, but rather

to aggravate the evils with which we are visited. The Israelites were commanded to destroy the Canaanites : they, however, suffered some of them to live, and those whom they spared became the instruments of chastising them again and again. And let me ask, what have not we as a nation done? We have cherished the serpent Popery, and it is at the present moment endeavouring to sting our vitals. Tell me not that I meddle with politics, my brethren ; let me tell you that the constitution of Britain was once a Theocracy ; and when our rulers and governors, yielding to carnal policy, have removed it from us, it is our duty, not indeed to speak bitterly against them, but to pray for them, as well as for our country. He who is aware of the evil of his own heart, and its legitimate desert, will feel intensely for the welfare of mankind at large, and more particularly for those with whom he is intimately connected. Pray for your country, and pray for the rulers of your country ; and give me leave to tell you, that you cannot pray aright for yourselves unless you do so.

3. He proves His family by false teachers. He suffers false teachers sometimes to insinuate themselves into His church. The Lord tells the Israelites of what they would be exposed to from false teachers ; but He gave them an infallible rule, He gave them His own revealed Will ; and He charges them not to listen to any one who would lead them astray from these truths (Deut. xiii. 3).

4. He tries them by suspending the influence of His Holy Spirit.

Now do not mistake me ; some would draw from this an erroneous inference, and suppose, that in consequence of it man necessarily falls into sin. But no : no being ever did or ever will *necessarily* fall into sin. Consider for a moment ; and then you will come to this safe conclusion. The devil himself is not under the *necessity* of sinning ; he never was, and never will be. If he were under a necessity of sinning, he could not be a moral and accountable agent. The influences of the Divine Spirit are not in the least degree necessary to render us accountable beings. The gift of the Holy Ghost is a sovereign gift, not a gift of equity. But what do we experience when the Divine influences are suspended ? Man rushes headlong into sin. Witness the conduct of Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxxii. 31). One would have imagined that he would have dwelt on the goodness and greatness of God when a foreign prince had sent his ambassador to him. But no ! he consulted his vanity, and that prompted him to exhibit himself. Think not lightly of this : Hezekiah was indeed, on the whole, an excellent man ; but when the Divine influence was withdrawn from him, we see him evincing the spirit which the devil himself evinced, when he first revolted against God, and which he will continue to evince throughout eternity.

5. He proves His people sometimes, by separating them from every thing that is dear to them. He

seems, sometimes, to cut asunder all the tender and delicate strings of the human heart. Witness the command given to Abraham to offer up his son Isaac: principle was tried here, and principle triumphed gloriously. While we see our own weakness in the absence of God, we should at the same time learn to read our own strength in His presence. No duty, however difficult, when God Himself is present, will ever be dreaded by His children; but it will be embraced with alacrity and pleasure, as the will of their Father who is in heaven.

6. He tries His family sometimes, by persecutions, We do not know much of persecution in this country: but there are those who feel the effects of it, even in the day in which we live; some who are living, solitarily, like the sparrow alone upon the house top. Look at such an individual, perhaps a weak female, in the midst of a family who are all the enemies of the living God; she is the object of their cruel scorn from day to day. Oh! it requires the spirit of a martyr to bear this, and the God of martyrs to inspire that spirit every moment.

II. Secondly, Consider the temptations of Satan.

And here we must take into consideration, the infusion of moral or spiritual evil. But here again, do not mistake me: Satan cannot force the will; that is impossible. No being can force the will. But Satan does *this*; he first of all lays hold of the imagination, and presents to men, (what shall I say?) he presents the almost boundless fields of fancy; with ten thousand

pictures of every thing that has a tendency to lead the heart astray from God. Satan first enters the imagination; from the imagination he travels to the heart, the affections, and all the corrupt propensities of human nature. Oh, my young friends, especially examine every thing that enters the imagination: do not play with any thing there; look to it that truth inhabits it. The most vivid imagination, the most refined sensibilities, are perfectly consistent with hardness of heart.

1. Satan tempted David to number his people; he presented his imagination with a wealthy and a populous kingdom. "Number those men, and dwell with delight on thine own greatness" (1 Chron. xxi. 1). David fell into the snare, and numbered the people.

It is recorded in the New Testament, that Satan entered into the heart of Judas. Satan presented him with the idea of wealth in his imagination, and from thence it travelled into his heart. Enrich thyself by sacrificing thy Master to the will of the people (John xiii. 2). Judas fell into the snare. These examples are perfectly applicable, because there is a similarity in all Satan's temptations, whether as presented to the enemies or to the friends of God. He takes possession not only of one, but every evil propensity, and the will of man consents; *the fool*, as he is emphatically called in the language of Scripture, falls wilfully and delightfully into the snares of the tempter. "A man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then

when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin : and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James i. 14, 15).

2. Ambition. Satan fixes the hearts of men, by taking possession of their imagination: he shewed to Buonaparte the glory of many kingdoms: he presented him with the most delightful pictures; with the idea of making himself, not only the monarch, but the God of the earth. He fell into the snare; and what were the sins he committed under the influence of ambition? Now observe: The tempter presented our Saviour with the kingdoms of this world and their glory, but he found nothing in Him; there was no inclination to meet it. The Saviour, doubtless, had a fine imagination. No one ever possessed what can be compared with it. He perused every thing with the eye, and appreciated every thing with the spirit, of one who is God; and he rejected every evil. And here I would make one observation: no evil could travel farther than the imagination in the person of the Saviour; so far and no farther; it could not enter in the least degree into his heart and affections: *there* good and evil were properly beheld; the former loved, prized, and welcomed; the latter invariably hated and rejected.

3. Satan lays hold of the indolence and sloth ✓ of men, to lead them into snares. My brethren, have always something to do. Be always engaged. God never intended that a single idler should exist upon the earth; but that all, high and

low, rich and poor, old and young, should be profitably employed. Even Adam, in a state of innocence in Paradise, was not to be idle, but to be engaged in tilling the ground. An idler is called, in the old English proverb, the devil's play-fellow: a proverb more just and important never flowed from the pen of man. David was an idler when he saw Bathsheba; if he had been lawfully engaged, he would not have fallen into the snare. The devil produced his internal and his external instruments for his overthrow, and triumphed. Oh, what a contrast is there between Uriah and David! Had not the Scriptures told me that David was the man after God's own heart, I could scarcely have believed it. Look at Uriah, brave, loyal, forgetting all the endearments of home, and devoting himself to his master David. Now view David sending this man, in the midst of all his loyalty, into the mouth of danger, and commanding him to be set in the front of the battle that he might be slain. Oh, my brethren, as I have told you before, if you wish to have peace of conscience, follow the example of Christ. Shun sin as you would avoid a hungry lion.

4. A fourth instrument to seduce into sin, is evil company.

Jehoshaphat associated with Ahab; and after imbibing a considerable portion of the spirit of Ahab, although the prophet of God had prohibited him from going to battle, he went with Ahab to Ramoth Gilead to fight, contrary to the command

of God. You cannot possibly be long in evil company without imbibing something of their spirit. A man who possesses what I may be allowed to call a spiritual taste, could not stay one moment, without feeling contaminated. Have no unnecessary intercourse with those who are not the friends of God. They will respect you for it, and respect your principles. They see such things with the eye of an eagle; and whatever their tongues may say of you, their hearts and their bosoms will be compelled to respect you. Joseph fell into bad company in the court of Pharaoh, and he learned to swear. He knew he was not allowed to swear but on solemn occasions, and by the name of God; yet he swore "by the life of Pharaoh." Peter went into bad company when he denied his Master; and from one sin he went on to another; first of all denying him, and then cursing and swearing that he knew him not. You had better be inoculated with the plague than have any thing to do with sin or sinners, in any shape whatever.

5. Satan adapts his temptations to the various tastes and propensities of persons; the wise and the unwise, the learned and the ignorant, the bond and the free. Consider all the countless shades of human conditions, and human characters, and Satan has a snare adapted to them all. "We are not ignorant of Satan's devices" (2 Cor. ii. 11). Brethren, let me again remind you affectionately and respectfully, that his first entrance is into the

imagination, and here he is to be withstood. Here Messiah himself withstood him, and triumphed over him.

III. I come now, in the third place, to consider the reasons why we should pray, “Lead us not into temptation;” or rather, some further reasons than those I have already adduced.

1. To teach us patience in the midst of temptations; if God, in His providence, lead us into them, or if Satan expose us to them. While we oppose them, and triumph over them in the strength of our Lord, they teach us patience. And remember again, that if we are truly wise in the wisdom of Jehovah, all the machinations of Satan, and all his attempts to ensnare us, will, eventually and for ever, issue in our final triumph and bliss.

2. It involves the deepest humility; a consciousness of our own absolute weakness and inability to withstand any temptation. In reading the history of the saints of God, we cannot but admire the fortitude and firmness with which, in the spirit of true religion, they met the severest trials; and yet, in further perusing their history, we find the very same individuals yielding to the slightest temptations. The least enemy is stronger than we are in ourselves; while we are stronger than the strongest in the strength of the Lord our God.

3. In the midst of trials and temptations, we pray for purity. Job was well aware of this, though as severely tried, perhaps, as any of his fellow-crea-

tures ever were. He says, "When I am tried, I shall come forth as gold" (Job xxiii. 10). Every thing he had was swept away by his arch enemy, Satan; and his friends assailed him with cruel and false charges; yet Job evidently triumphs in the midst of all his trials. I need not now give you the proof afforded by the sequel of his interesting history, to shew that he did triumph.

4. We pray in the midst of trials and temptations, that the strength of God may be made perfect in our weakness. It is the province of FAITH to wield, in one important sense, all the attributes of Jehovah; and only when doing so, can the believer anticipate a triumph over all his enemies. The Apostle Paul was made deeply conscious of his own weakness, for he had a thorn in the flesh: what that was, I do not pretend to determine; nor do I know that it would be of any benefit to you if I could; but of one thing I am certain, that if it had been necessary for us to know it, it would have been revealed: however, there was something in it that was a temptation to sin; something which involved a severe exercise of feeling, with a tendency to rebel against God; but he prayed, and the answer was most satisfactory: "My strength is made perfect in weakness; my grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. xii. 9). We first of all triumph over ourselves, at a Throne of Grace; that triumph involves in it a triumph over God, like that of Jacob. Having triumphed there, we are destined to triumph

everywhere else. The first triumph of the believer is in the closet; and whatever appears to man, is only the effect flowing from that cause. An individual may be considered very rich; he may have an accumulation of boundless wealth; if you were suffered to go into his counting house, you should soon be able to tell whether he were so or not. Enter into your counting-houses, enter into your closets; how do you appear there? Do you lay siege to the Throne of Grace, and tell the Lord that you *must* have Divine grace, or that, if you do not, you must fall? No one but God knows to what you are exposed. O pray, pray to God; enrich yourselves in your closets, and you will be rich every where else.

5. The wicked are said to be led by the Lord into temptation. This truth only involves their abuse of the *gifts* of God. They wish to have the good things of God's providence: God gives them; and they abuse them all without one single exception. All the gifts of God are good in themselves, but the abuse of them is man's doing. Or perhaps, to give a more Scriptural account of it, God leaves them to their own ways. He lets them have their own heart's desire; and nothing more is necessary to make men the slaves of sin here, and the victims of hell hereafter.

IV. We are taught to pray, "*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*" (or the evil one), for the following reasons.

1. Consider what sin is. It is enmity against God ; it is enmity in the abstract ; it is nothing but enmity. Some enmity may be qualified : sin cannot be. What is involved in enmity against God, no one but God can fully know. No one but Messiah knows the evil of sin. He does, because he suffered all its tremendous consequences.

2. Because sin, as being enmity against God, robs man of every good, and visits him with every evil. Sin visits him with a multitude of evils, even in this life. If you were to examine the votaries of pleasure, you would soon come to this conclusion ; for many of them anticipate the awful doom that awaits them ; and if they harden themselves to such a degree as to be insensible to this, it only proves that their case is still worse : “ The way of transgressors is hard.” The reason why we have so much evil in the world, is in consequence of sin. Some people have travelled back to Adam’s sin, and said, ‘ These are the effects of the Fall :’ but Adam never obliged the drunkard to get drunk. There is nothing in Adam’s transgression to oblige him to do this. There is nothing in Adam’s transgression to oblige the thief to be dishonest, or the liar to tell one falsehood. I could prove all these things, had I time. Oh, let us beware of a system of necessity, which involves in it the fatalism of the Koran of Mohammed, not the predestination of the word of God. What are the calamities of the country to be attributed to ? To the sins of individuals. If we could make the

drunkard sober; if we could make the thief honest; if we could make the liar speak the truth, Britain would be a heaven compared with what it is at the present moment. The misery existing in the world, at the present day, flows from the sins of individuals who are now living. God will one day remove moral evil; and then a thousand blessings of His providence will reach men, which cannot possibly reach them at the present moment. There is much suffering in London, in consequence of moral evil: if we could remove the latter, the former would in a great measure cease to exist.

3. We are taught to pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;" that is, from the evil of sin; because sin aims at the destruction of all the creatures of God, by aiming first of all at the destruction of God himself.

4. We are taught to pray thus, which is the concluding prayer, because sin is the greatest of all evils; it is the parent of every other evil. And now let me ask you, my brethren, whence and from whom could this prayer come, but from the heart of one who is God?

To conclude, learn,

1. The hypocrisy of those who pray, and yet at the same time do not watch against the incursions of sin, but sit down quietly under them: he who prays as he ought to pray, opposes sin at the same time: "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation" (Matt. xxvi. 41).

2. Learn to avoid every thing which has the remotest tendency to lead into sin; and do not listen to those thoughtless professors of religion, who would call these things "legality." Notwithstanding all their profession of religion, I do not hesitate to call them the ministers of sin and Satan. Solomon gives a very valuable piece of advice when he says, addressing the young man, "Remove thy way far from her; come not nigh unto the door of her house" (Prov. v. 8). He is here advising the young man to avoid the snare of the harlot; and he says, "Remove thy way *far* from her;" live at the antipodes; do not approach the door of her house; and this advice is truly excellent with respect to every other evil; with respect to every other enemy.

3. Seek the light and influence of the Divine Spirit continually; and remember, too, that the *light* of the Divine Spirit is not enough. His *energy* is absolutely necessary to influence the heart. There may be a great deal of light in the intellect, where the heart is not under the influence of Divine Grace. Invoke the energy, as well as the light, of the Divine Spirit; that truth may take possession of the whole man; of the heart and affections, as well as the head.

4. And Lastly, present all your petitions to God, in the intercession of Jesus Christ. 'My prayer is a very unworthy one:' prayer supposes this; if we had no imperfection within us, our lives would be ceaseless praise. 'I feel sin strong within me:'

prayer supposes the existence of innumerable enemies ; but in whom is our strength ? In whom is our triumph deposited ? In our covenant Head and Representative, Christ Jesus the Lord, who presents all the prayers of his family before the throne of God, and imparts to *them* daily and constantly that measure of strength which is necessary to enable them to triumph. He says, “Underneath thee are the everlasting arms” (Deut. xxxiii. 27) ; and, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be” (Deut. xxxiii. 25). Pray, pray, pray without ceasing ; and remember, that you have an Advocate on high. Let me remind you of this truth in the midst of all your imperfections : while you have a grain of spiritual honesty, your prayers are more acceptable to God, in the intercession of Jesus Christ, than the triumphant strains of angels.

SERMON X.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. vi. 13.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.

THE conclusion of this prayer, like every other part of it, presents us with all the credentials of heaven: "Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." Man does not possess honesty enough to ascribe the glory to God, till not only taught, but also enabled, by God Himself, to do so. The more I consider this prayer, the more am I lost in its glory. It has matter enough in it to preach on every Sabbath, even were my life prolonged to the age of Methuselah. Every word proves clearly that it emanates from the bosom of Him who is Supreme. It does more: every petition in this prayer proves that it emanates from the bosom of one who is man as well as God.

If I begin this interesting prayer, and say, "Our Father," I behold Messiah himself taking his family by the hand, and saying, "I will lead

you into the presence of my God, and your God, of my Father and your Father ; be not afraid."

As Intercessor between God and man, we find in him all the glory of Deity, as well as all the exquisite feelings of humanity. He leads his family to the Lord of Hosts, as an object of worship, himself a worshipper : and now mark the conclusion : "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory." Behold him here, the first of worshippers, as well as an object of worship : the first of subjects, and the first of kings, as I have told you before. Who that does justice to this interesting truth would ever sit down in despondency, much less despair ; admitting even that the aggregate sins of the human race (great as they are) were upon his head. It is not the multitude of our transgressions that will consign any of us to hell : nothing less than the rejection of the infinitely glorious remedy, a remedy provided by God Himself, will do this. And this, my brethren, will seal our condemnation with all the vengeance of everlasting fire. Forbid it, O Lord God Almighty, and suffer no one who is here this evening to fall into the jaws of eternal destruction.

I. In this ascription of glory to the Father, there is,—

1. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Illustrating one Scripture by another : "Through Him, we

both (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. ii. 18). The Apostle Paul, in teaching the Hebrews, thus addresses them: "Having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith" (Heb. x. 22).

Consider, as an example, the Saviour's own faith; and his faith is recorded as an example, and consequently as an encouragement, to us in the midst of every difficulty. No one among all his brethren ever exercised faith as he did. He was the only one whose faith never failed him, even in the least degree.

2. This ascription of praise to the Father involves in it likewise our hope; hope which anticipates the eternal possession and enjoyment of the exceeding great and precious promises of God; "In hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lie promised before the world began" (Tit. i. 2).

The Saviour himself is here again an eminent example; and the Apostle presents him as such to the attention of all believers. "Wherefore," says he, "seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses;" (saints and angels beholding us with the most intense interest and delight every moment;) "let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us; and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who," (now here is his hope) "for the joy that was set before him

endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." There is the kingdom ! (Heb. xii. 1, &c.)

3. This ascription of praise to God involves in it the gratitude of His believing family: " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ; to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept *by the power of God* through faith unto salvation." (1 Peter i. 3, &c.) There is the power.

It involves in it the praises of God ascending from the bosom of faith and hope, to the ears of the Almighty as a sacrifice most acceptable to Him. Let nothing rob you of this truth : God is delighted with the service of His family, especially with their praises, notwithstanding the many imperfections which inhabit their bosoms.

4. The Apostle connects praise and prayer together, " By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God " (Phil. iv. 6). We find praises blended with prayer in Scripture ; and prayer is never perfect till matured into praise. Many individuals are disposed to ask this question, ' How am I to know that my prayers are heard and answered by the Almighty ? ' Some satisfactory answers might be given ; I shall only point out one at present.

Are you enabled to praise God? If so, you may be as certain as you are of your own existence that your prayers are heard and answered.

Praise on earth is as sure an evidence that prayer is heard and answered, as praise in heaven is. My dear brethren, do you know what it is to praise God? If not, you do not know what the sweetness of true religion is. It is in praise that we are made like the Almighty. He is ever engaged in contemplating His own glories with the most intense delight; and thus in praise we most resemble Him.

The individual who praises God will not have to travel very far for evidence of his adoption into His family. He will enter into the recesses of his own bosom; there he will meet the aggregate forces of earth and hell; and there defeat them. O may we know what it is to praise God.

The concluding part of this prayer affords to us the most copious matter of praise: it involves Deity Himself in all the glory of His perfections. *Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever.*

1. First then, Praise God for what He is in Himself. Praise must begin here. This may appear strange to some, and an impossibility to others; but the solution is easy.

Consider—God is not only the most necessary of all Beings; but, properly speaking, necessity can be predicated of none but God. He exists of

necessity. It is equally true that the freedom of God is infinitely more than that of any other being. We find freedom and necessity involved in each other, in the most glorious manner in Jehovah. If we contemplate His Essence He exists necessarily; because He exists from eternity. His existence no more depends on His will, than yours or mine. Consider Him then as necessarily existent; ever engaged in delighting in Himself; ever engaged in willing that which is holy, just, and good; ever engaged in willing the highest good to the most degraded, most unworthy of all beings; the human family; and is He not worthy of being praised for what He is in Himself? It is from what He is in Himself, that all the blessings of the covenant of grace proceed; it is from what He is in Himself, that His covenant emanates; and from His covenant all the rich blessings of salvation continue to flow incessantly from Heaven to earth. Oh praise Him, praise Him, praise Him for ever and ever.

I have said that praise is the perfection of prayer. Read the concluding Psalms; they are all praises, as the others are, for the most part, prayers; and it is as if the Psalmist had said, I have prayed till I can pray no longer, I have been so richly answered; God Himself is descending into my bosom every moment, I will praise Him myself, and call upon every one else to do so too; I will not suffer any being in the universe to be silent:

Sun, moon, and stars, earth, dragons, and all deeps; fire and hail, snow and vapour; stormy winds; mountains and hills; trees, beasts, and all cattle; creeping things and flying fowl, kings and people; princes and judges; young and old; they shall all join me in the praises of God. Nor is this to be considered exclusively as poetical imagery: sublime and beautiful in the extreme it is, we acknowledge; but there is more than this in it. All the creatures of God are His ministers; they are ministers to His church; they become the occasion of praise to the believer. He reads in them the perfections of his heavenly Father, and especially His love to fallen man. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever: to Him that made great lights; for His mercy endureth for ever; The sun to rule by day, for His mercy endureth for ever; the moon and stars to rule by night, for His mercy endureth for ever." (Ps. cxxxvi).

The Lord has *written mercy* on every thing, that we may live in ceaseless communion with Him; in daily enjoyment of all our blessings, and in feasting on all the rich privileges He has given to us.

2. God is to be praised, because He is the Universal Monarch as well as Parent of all beings.

"*Thine is the kingdom.*" He is enthroned in grace: He is enthroned in glory: He is enthroned in providence. O the awful effects of sin; were it not for sin we should be incessantly praising God. If our hearts were as they ought to be with God,

His praises would be involved in our salutation when we meet, and when we leave each other. May God have mercy upon us ; and let us never cease aiming at perfection ; however short we may fall of it now, we shall attain it eventually. It is the privilege of the believer to derive valuable lessons from all his imperfections, and all his lapses. I remember, when at school, reading of a celebrated giant who derived new strength from every fall ; so shall we. The believer often says, “I have fallen.” Have you indeed, and have you taken your own dimensions in your fall ? Have you taken your length and breadth ; and have you been deeply humbled before God ; and has your unworthiness endeared to you the God of your salvation ? We know that skilful artists and mechanics derive good from every error they commit ; they gain instruction from every mistake. This is true wisdom. May we learn to do the same.

3. God is to be praised for His omnipotence : “Thine is the power.” We have in the economy of salvation, and the things connected with it, all the will, and all the power of God. We cannot have more than this, and we cannot do with less. His will appears more glorious in the redemption and salvation of fallen man than in any thing else ; but it is indispensably connected with His power. Whatever God wills, His power *must* execute. His power may very properly be called the minister of His will. Before *His* power, what difficulties,

what obstacles, what enemies, can stand? Not one; they must all eventually fall. His will and power are engaged to bless and crown His family with every good; to deliver them from every evil and rescue them from the fangs of every foe (1 Pet. i. 3, 5). We find His power in every thing. I move my finger in His power at the present moment. I cannot explain it to you, nor can any one explain it. A skilful anatomist might tell me many things of which I am ignorant; but still he could ascend no higher than to second causes. It is very well known that every new discovery in science involves in it a discovery of human ignorance. O that scientific men would think of this! I do not quarrel with science, I only quarrel with the abuse of it; with its idolatry. The man who is imbued with the spirit of true religion will derive rich instruction from science.

4. God is to be praised for His glory.

“Thine is the glory.” The glory of God may be considered in a two-fold point of view; His *essential* glory, and His *manifested* glory (Psalm xix. 1).

His essential glory involves in it every excellence, every good. Glory, in the Hebrew language, means what is weighty. What is so weighty as Deity? It means *substance*: “The wise shall inherit *substance*” (Prov. viii. 21): this is the word.

When we think and speak of Deity, all comparisons fail. Contrasts present themselves con-

tinually. The aggregate value of all finite Being, when contrasted with Deity, would be infinitely less than a drop of water when contrasted with the ocean; or than a particle of light when contrasted with the body of the sun. Yet though it is impossible to fathom the perfections of God, we may know a great deal of them. There is no being so difficult, there is no being so easy to study, as God. His moral and spiritual perfections may be investigated with the utmost ease. The peasant enters into them with as much, if not more, ease than one who is possessed of the genius of a Newton.

But the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ; His mercy, His truth, His faithfulness, His promises, His precepts; *these* are the things that God intended us to study, and in these we are to delight. “Now unto God and our Father be glory *for ever and ever*” (Phil. iv. 20).

5. Eternity is destined to be filled and occupied with His praises. “This God is our God for ever and ever” (Ps. xlviii. 14). In heaven above, saints and angels are ceaselessly engaged in worshipping God. Messiah himself, in his humanity, taking the lead in His worship; and entering, fully entering, into the delightful service. God is ever engaged (as I have before observed) in contemplating His own perfections; Messiah and his family are following Him, and they will continue to follow Him, for ever and ever.

I do not know how I can better conclude this sermon, than by recapitulating the whole of the Lord's Prayer.

First. "*Our Father*," the most endearing of all relationships; a relationship destined to swallow up every other. All relationships here below, under the blessing of God, and in the economy of Divine mercy, are intended to lose themselves in this for ever. It involves in it the highest reverence, as well as the strongest love. It connects together the intercession of Jesus Christ, and the prayers of all his saints.—"*Our Father which art in heaven*." I am never afraid of approaching a Throne of Grace, however unworthy I am: Jesus is there: I am sensible it must be a snare of the devil that would drive me away. If guilt assail me, this is the reason why I should approach to be forgiven. If a remembrance of past unworthiness oppress me; if Satan were to present me with a muster roll of all my past sins; these are only so many reasons why I should *approach* my heavenly Father, before whose throne my elder Brother is continually pleading my cause: nay, I should rather make use of the temptation of Satan as an encouragement to go to a Throne of Grace: I should say to the tempter, 'As I have *such* a God as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *such* an elder Brother who is ceaselessly engaged in interceding for me; I am determined to persevere, and in His strength triumph over you.' Thus then answer the devil.

“ Resist him, and he will flee from you,” saith the page of inspiration.

2. “ *Hallowed be thy Name.*” We are taught in these words this lesson ; that every thing of God, and every thing connected with God, ought to be treated with the highest reverence.

Parents, my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord, watch over your children. Never suffer them to take the Name of God in vain ; and forgive me for telling you of what I myself experienced, in consequence of the prayers and pains of a pious mother, who has long since been in heaven. When I was placed in the midst of boys at school, who were practising almost every wickedness, I could not join them. I speak this to the glory of my God, not in praise of myself. I could not take the name of God in vain. I could not utter oaths and lies as others did ; in consequence of the exertions of a pious mother, blessed to me by the Lord.

3. “ *Thy kingdom come.*” May He reign in every human heart ; and reign He will, no doubt,

“ From East to West,
From India to the pole.”

We have the promise, “ The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea ” (Habbak. ii. 14). Messiah will reign universally ; He will subdue to himself the family of Adam at last ; and I have no doubt that he has begun the work, and that we are living in the dawn of the millennial day. But before the Sun of Righteousness will

arise with universal healing in his wings, the nations of the earth will, I suppose, be visited with severe chastisement; this chastisement, however, will involve a blessing of the highest order; it will cast from the earth all sin and error in principle, and in practice. Socinians will not live then. Papists must throw away all their idols to the moles and to the bats. The presence of Divine truth will annihilate error, and will penetrate the inmost recesses of the human heart. Divine truth will change and purify the fountain; and its hallowed streams will then richly flow into the life of the believer. "Thy kingdom come:" this involves two things: not only our ceaseless prayers; but our ceaseless exertions to promote the glory of God, by doing good to the souls of men. And we all can do more than we are aware of. We do not know what we can do until we try.

I cannot help thinking of the little captive girl: I am disposed to think that she preached Jesus to Naaman the Syrian. "Would God," she said, "my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy" (2 Kings v. 3). The Syrian was wise enough to listen to this little captive maid; and he travelled to the land of Israel, where he became acquainted with the God of Israel. Many would have said to her, 'Be silent; will a great man listen to you?' her conduct says, 'I will not be silent; I have something to say for God.' I pray that God may bless you abundantly, all you are

and all you have, that it may richly flow into the service of God; and that you may teach men to love and adore your heavenly Father. Above all, in your families exhibit the image of the living God perpetually. Parents, fathers and mothers, let your children see the image of God in the whole of your deportment. Masters and mistresses, shew to your servants the image of the living God. If they are wicked in consequence of seeing you wicked, how can you have the face to reprove them? O exhibit the image of Deity to the whole of your family; and then when any of them do wrong, the reproof will descend, originally, from God Himself; and you will only be the channel of communication. And do not imagine that I am flattering you, when I tell you it will derive a rich tincture from your own feelings: human feelings are necessary to meet human feelings, and this is what we find in Messiah; God in all His glory, and human feelings in all their perfection. Imitate him then, and they will love you for your reproof.

4. *“Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”* In addition to prayer, this involves in it a ceaseless endeavour to sacrifice our own corrupt will to the will of God; (God has provided us with the means of doing so;) and to say as the Saviour did, *“Not my will, but thine be done”* (Luke xxii. 42). In all things study the will of God. There may be cases in which the believer may be perplexed; yet when the desire is honest, he perseveres in waiting on his God; and he certainly will learn

his heavenly Father's will. If the vision "tarry, wait for it" (Habbak. ii. 3); if it be night with your soul, yet persevere in prayer; the dawn is fast approaching.

5. "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" Here we should learn that we cannot eat the bread, and drink the water, which are necessary for the support of our frail bodies, as we ought to do, without eating and drinking that bread and water which are absolutely necessary to keep the *soul* alive. Oh, how awful is the state of those who are described by the Apostle himself, as eating and drinking their own damnation, in coming to the Lord's table (1 Cor. xi. 29); and they are eating and drinking their own damnation, in every thing, until they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ: until then, every thing becomes a curse. It is dreadful in the extreme to remark, that though the richest blessings come from God continually, as all his creatures do, yet they are in effect changed into curses by the unbeliever.

"Give us this day our daily bread." And why? Because Christ himself has purchased it for us. He has purchased our temporal as well as our spiritual food; and it is in the economy of Divine government, that we are never to eat the former as we ought to eat it, but in eating the latter. May God teach us to do so!

6. "*And forgive us our debts.*" God delights in mercy; His child delights in mercy too. Shew me an individual who delights in mercy, and I will

shew you a saint ; I will point out one who is destined to triumph over all his enemies. But the believer is blessed with a disposition to delight in mercy, in a two-fold point of view. He delights first in receiving mercy at the hands of God ; and he delights in bestowing mercy on others. Mercy is the only element in which the soul is destined to live, and sin is destined to die ; and remember, sin must die, or the soul must die. God cannot annihilate sin, but in and by His mercy. I mention this to awaken those dreamers who talk of the mercy of God, while at the same time they live in the most thoughtless manner. Oh ! live in the daily habit of receiving mercy at the hands of God ; and of bestowing mercy on all those who have injured you. In the name of the living God, I adjure you not to cherish any soreness of feeling towards any individual : if you do so, you will suffer severely. If I wished to treat any one with the most refined severity, I should teach him to hate me ; and while he keeps that hatred alive, it must be as a vulture preying upon his soul ; it will torment him morning, noon, and night. Have mercy upon yourselves then, by shewing mercy to others.

7. "*As we forgive our debtors.*" Mercy to others involves in it, not only a forgiveness of injury, but a delight in doing them every possible good. Every injury must be washed away from our memory, as the tide washes away every impression from the sand. In receiving injuries, we should be sand ; but in receiving benefits, we should be

rocks yielding to the chisel, and retaining an impression destined to live for ever.

8. "*Lead us not into temptation.*" This involves wisdom and circumspection as well as prayer. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. xxvi. 41). Watch and pray: our enemies are very vigilant; they know no rest; they never close their eyes; they are circumventing us every moment. Let us learn a lesson from them; and it is wisdom to be taught by them: let us learn vigilance from them.

9. "*But deliver us from evil.*" This teaches us that none but God can deliver us. We cannot deliver ourselves from the least, from the weakest, of our enemies; but God can deliver us from the greatest: and for the encouragement of some weak individuals, I would say, God not only can deliver; but He *has* delivered some of His family, after they have run themselves wilfully into the toils and meshes of Satan. Yes, He can deliver, and He does deliver, even in those cases which appear desperate and extreme. His deliverance admits of no exception. His rule is not a general rule, it is universal.

10. "*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.*"

And thus a life of faith involves in it a life of ceaseless prayer, a life of ceaseless praise to God. We are now in a state of discipline, of preparation for heaven. The Holy Spirit is making us "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in

light" (Col. i. 12); but how does He effect it? He first of all introduces principle into the human heart, to counteract and undermine principle: this ripens into habit, and then flows into the life to correct every thing wrong in it. Oh, cultivate principles; cultivate them in yourselves, and in your family, and in your servants. Cultivate them in all with whom you are connected. My brethren, be ambitious of making yourselves individually, and your houses, and every individual in them, a temple, and temples of the living God! Try what you can do. Lay siege to a Throne of Grace; imitate the conduct of men of the world, when under some reigning passion: when they have any particular object in view, they say, 'I will try; I do not see any impossibility in my way; there are difficulties, but I will endeavour to triumph over them.' Imitate then the conduct of the children of darkness, who are "wiser in their generation than the children of light," (Luke xvi. 8). They that are for us, are more than they that are against us. Our friends are more numerous than our foes. All the attributes of Deity are on our side; all the saints and angels in heaven are with us; all the prayers of God's family are with us, and are ascending to heaven continually. Try then any thing, and every thing, that is well pleasing to the Lord; and as surely as you try you shall prosper. Amen.

SERMON XI.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATT. VI. 13.

Amen.

I HAVE never felt the excellencies and glories of this prayer so strongly, as I do at the present moment. I see Messiah and his family, in the whole of it, from first to last.

He intimates, in the commencement of it, that he will present our prayers in his own intercession before God : this is the reason why he says "Our Father," which includes himself as well as his family. In the conclusion of the prayer, we find him again placing himself at the head of his family, as the first of worshippers in the ascription of praise to God : "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever." He is at this present moment engaged in praise, as well as in intercession.

The faculties of the Saviour's humanity are so wonderfully enlarged, that the aggregate sum of human ability sinks into nothing when compared, or rather contrasted, with it. If some great man were to take up this subject, many valuable

truths respecting it might yet be elicited from an attentive perusal of the Scriptures; always bearing in mind, that he is Messiah in our nature; God over all, blessed for ever. In this nature he has triumphed for us; and the provisions of the covenant of grace are so glorious, that our triumph is as fully and completely secured as his own. Do not shrink from this; nothing less could secure the salvation of any human being.

I. *Amen* involves in it the faithfulness and truth of God: and as an appendage to this prayer, it involves in it our conviction of the truth of God our assurance of His holy truth. And now what shall I say of those who tremble in the presence of the God of heaven and earth, and teach others to tremble, when they should be teaching them to rejoice?

Amen involves in it all the glory of the Divine perfections, and the complete triumph of the believer. Divine things are true in themselves; they were true from eternity; they involve truth in them. Do not mistake me; and do not imagine that I am inaccurate; they involve the essence of truth, God himself, who was Truth before time began. But though true in themselves, they are not so to us until we receive them in the Amen of God: they then become living truths within our own bosoms: God Himself inhabits the bodies as well as the souls of His children: their bodies as well as their souls are the temples of Jehovah: the

great Amen lives in His own truth in the human bosom, and He will inhabit it for ever and ever.

There is a peculiarity in all the Saviour's addresses, He uses a language which none dare use but Himself. His language is the language of God. No one begins his discourse, as He does, with "Amen." It is another Greek word that the Apostles use, when they would convey the same idea, or something like it; but Jesus Christ, especially in the Gospel of St. John, uses the word according to the Hebrew idiom, "Amen and Amen." Now there is a reason for this; and the reason is most weighty, as well as most obvious; nothing can be more cogent, nothing more interesting. It is a title of Messiah. He entitles Himself, "the Amen;" that is, the true God, the God of faithfulness. Compare two texts of Scripture together on this subject. Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God' (Rev. iii. 14). "He who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth," *i. e.* in God Amen! "And he that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of truth," *i. e.* by God Amen! Who then is Jesus, who stiles Himself the Amen, but the God of truth. He is the God, who is the Amen; and as such, He is always opposed in Scripture to false gods; gods whose very essence is falsehood; whose composition is nothing but lies. Jesus Christ, as Amen, is the very essence

of revealed truth ; and bear this in mind, that truth has no independent existence: moral spiritual truth exists only in God ; it cannot be separated from Him.

“ *Amen.*” I will fill this prayer, and answer it, with myself. Pray then; I will inspire the prayer; it shall ascend to the Father’s ears in my intercession. I will put myself into it; and then descend myself in all the blessings that flow down from heaven to earth, to preserve you and bless you for evermore. Jesus Christ is the unerring Prophet; Jesus Christ is the faithful and true Witness; Jesus Christ is the sworn, or, in other words, the adjured God. This is the import of Amen at the end of this prayer. “ All the promises of God are yea and amen in Him ” (2 Cor. i. 20): they are so fully involved in him, that they cannot be separated from him; they comprise Deity in all His glory; they could not be yea and amen in Jesus Christ, if this were not the case. All the promises involve in them the oath of God, the adjured Deity. All His truth is confirmed by His promise and oath, ratified by the death of Jesus, and sealed by His Holy Spirit. When a Jew was formerly sworn, this was the import of the oath administered to him; “ I swear, or I adjure thee, by the Lord God of Israel, or by the Name of Him who is mercy.” The witness then who was about to give his testimony answered “ Amen,” and thus was sworn. And this was swearing by the God of truth. I know not now what be-

comes of the Quakers' objection to taking an oath. Irreverent oaths are indeed denounced in Scripture; but there are times and seasons when the believer is justified in taking an oath; and in so doing he is led to consider it as an act of worship: this is what an oath is when properly understood. And can it be wrong, my brethren, to worship God? But in the light in which I am speaking of oaths now, what a state is Britain in! Oaths are multiplied perpetually; and men are taking them with as little thought, as if God would not vindicate His insulted Law, and avenge the honour of His own name.

"Amen." Thus the Saviour concludes: I am the sworn God; I am the adjured Deity: your prayers shall ascend to the Father's ears involved in my oath; his own oath will receive and fulfil them; and I, by my Holy Spirit, will indite them in your heart. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" (1 John v. 7). You know that that text has been much controverted; but the truth is completely scriptural; it is fully involved in the whole of revelation. We have precisely the same thing in many other texts of Scripture: the truth contained in it not only pervades the whole of the revealed will of God, but is again and again expressly declared. Hear what the Amen says, in addressing himself to Nicodemus. He begins first of all, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee" (John iii. 11); in other words, Amen,

Amen, *I* say unto thee : now mark, “ We speak that *we* do know, and testify that *we* have seen ; and ye receive not *our* witness.” Here is a change in *the person* from the singular to the plural, proving clearly that not *one* person alone in Jehovah gives us His oath, but the Three. Compare this with the passage to which I have just adverted : “ There are *three* that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.” I cannot give up that text, while I trust that God would give me courage to perish rather than sacrifice the truth that is contained in it : “ There are *three* witnesses in heaven.”

His Essence, then, to repeat what I have told you before, (and the truth will bear frequent repetition, without losing any part of its interest,) His Essence pervades His truth, and that truth never can be insipid to those who have any spiritual taste. Are any tired of the sun ? Are any tired of bread and water ? We cannot exist without them. The light of the sun never tires ; bread and water never become insipid ; because we stand in need of them every moment : and for the same reason, to those who are spiritually minded, the truth of God is never wearisome, never insipid. Are they tired of the Sun of Righteousness ? Are they weary of His rays ? Oh, no ! they cannot live without them.

But now to consider some of the important uses of “ Amen,” at the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer.—

1. To remind God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, of His and Their oaths ; by which the promises of God, by which the truths of God, are confirmed to believers. Men, when they enter into an engagement, and honestly intend the fulfilment of it, frequently say, if applied to afterwards, ‘ Interrupt me not ; my mind is made up : you have my promise, no farther petition is necessary.’ Not so with God. He delights to be reminded of His engagements, of His promise, of His oath : and remember, His oath is full of Himself. It is intended by God, that in every prayer that flows from our lips, we should remind Him of His covenant oath ; of His own oath sealed and ratified in His dear Son, for the fulfilment of all His promises. Oh what truths we have in Divine Revelation. Our loss is incalculable, if we are not attentive to them. I have the oath of God, that all sin shall be forgiven for the sake of Jesus ! I have the oath of God, that though my sins be as scarlet, they shall be as snow ! I have the oath of God, that though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool ! O pray then ; pray, my brethren ; let the oath of God ascend in your daily petitions ; and He will descend, in the fulfilment of His own oath, with all the blessings you need.

2. A second use is this, To strengthen our faith. It is a strong encouragement to go to an individual who is possessed of well-known bounty, and of all the means necessary to fulfil his en-

gagements. Sometimes persons have a great deal of trouble to see an individual ; but at other times, we hear it said, ‘ Do not be afraid of waiting on him ; he is a man of integrity and beneficence.’ We have here the integrity and beneficence of God ; and the oath is given in compassion to our infirmity. The oath is (what shall I say ?) the sword of the Almighty which He intends shall be buried in the vitals of unbelief. Hear what He says, “ That by two immutable things,” (the oath and the promise of God,) “ in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Heb. vi. 18). Can any thing have a more immediate tendency to strengthen the weak believer, than the oath of his heavenly Father ? the oath of his eldest Brother ; and at the same time, the oath of the Divine Spirit ; whose province it is to be the Guide and Comforter of His family during their pilgrimage here below ?

3. It is of use, in the third place, to teach us to devote ourselves to the faith, to the love, and to the service of the Redeemer of mankind. I will tell you my own opinion on this subject ; I have considered it, and I speak it not only with conviction, but with a consciousness of its accuracy. It is this : that when the believer, in the spirit of true devotion, beholds the glories of the religion of Jesus ; when his heart imbibes its rich influences ; he binds himself by an oath to serve his God.

He says, 'Thou hast given me Thy oath, and Thyself in that oath, O my God! and in "Amen," I give thee my oath in grateful return, and myself in that oath.' This it is. Have you courage to do it, my brother? Do we consider well the import of it, when we do it? Happy the man, happy the woman, who knows the import of the word.

See what results from it: God and His children united together in all the bonds of eternity! Bound in the oath of God; bound by the mighty power of God Himself.

There are promises in the Old Testament that "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel" (Isai. xliv. 5). Here is a confirmation of what I say. O my brethren! fix your eyes on the glories of the region of bliss, and be not dismayed by any difficulties internal or external. God delights to triumph over them all. I do not know how the believer can know himself well, without going through much bitter, as well as much sweet, discipline. All discipline is designed to teach him his own weakness, and to teach him at the same time the strength of his covenant God. Am I in a dark, in a dull, in a stupid frame of mind? The oath of God is alive; ever alive; as full of Himself as it ever was: there is no lethargy in His oath!

4. The "Amen" at the conclusion of this prayer

reproves severely and bitterly every irreverent use of it. How many thousand times have you and I used this prayer, little thinking of its true import. Alas, in what have we been engaged ; and how does it still flow from the lips of unbelievers, without any communication with the human intellect or the human heart. But will God accept of such services as these ? We must stand before the bar of God ; and if any go on thoughtlessly repeating this sublime prayer, woe unto them. People dream of going to heaven by doing the best they can, as they call it, and leaving the Saviour to make good their deficiencies ; but I must tell you plainly, that if God were to enter into judgment with us, we must be condemned even for the imperfection of our best performances. Alas ! alas !

5. It reproves likewise the neglect of this prayer ; and the neglect not only of the prayer, but of the “ Amen ” at the conclusion of it. God delights in being reminded of his covenant engagements, and of His oath in making His engagements. Now let me read a passage of Scripture to you. When Ezra opened the book of the Lord in the presence of the Israelites of old, it is said, “ Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God : and all the people answered Amen, Amen, with the lifting up of their hands : and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground ” (Neh. viii. 6). It is dreadful to find this rich, this infinitely rich title of Messiah, insulted as it is.

6. This word pours contempt on prayers in an

unknown tongue. We are all to pray together. Suppose, when we meet together, one were to pray in French, another in English, and another in Welsh; what confusion there would be. We might pray, but we should not understand one another. God intended that we should be social worshippers; and for this purpose we must use an intelligible language. They all understand each other in heaven; there is nothing unintelligible there; all is plain, all is lucid there. Away then with all the imposture of Popery, and praying in an unknown tongue.

7. This word teaches us that our hearts should be engaged in this prayer, and in saying "Amen" to it. God Himself, in the Old and New Testaments, tells us of some who draw near to Him with their lips, but their hearts are removed far from Him (Isai. xxix. 13). O how they insult God in so doing! How will persons sometimes impose upon themselves; and still think, in the midst of all their mockery of religion, that God will receive their prayers! When they visit a friend, they carry their hearts with them; but, when they wait upon God, they act as if they thought Him not worthy of their affections. Alas! this is the worship which thousands and millions in the present day are offering to the Lord. Do you think such worship will be accepted by the Lord? My brethren, where are our hearts? Are we desirous that they should be safely deposited in the centre of the bosom of God himself? This is true religion!

8. Lastly : Our prayers ought to be in unison with the Divine Will. In this case, they most assuredly

will be heard and answered. "In this we have confidence," says the Apostle; "that if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us" (1 John v. 14). In some temporal things we may err; but, it is scarcely possible for individuals acquainted with the truth of God to err in spiritual things. I do not mean to say it is impossible; but in the midst of all the imperfections of our prayers, let it ever be remembered that the Saviour corrects all our errors: they fall into *his* hands, and *there* all their imperfections stop; they go no farther; he buries them all in the depths of the sea; he clothes all our prayers with his perfections, and then presents them to the Father, perfumed with his own incense. Oh, what a Friend we have on high! Be not discouraged, then, because there are imperfections in your prayers: prayer implies not only the imperfections of our other services, but its own: and this we should remember; that as Jesus bore the iniquities of our holy things on his cross, he will also bear them in his intercession.

To sum up the whole then in a few words:

1. First of all, in using the Lord's Prayer, we fulfil the whole law; we pray for God's grace, not only for ourselves, but for each other. The Law was intended to live in the Gospel, otherwise it would be no Gospel. The distinction made on this subject by our old divines is this. We are delivered from the law as a covenant of works, to be conformed to it as a rule of life; and this is the meaning of our reply to the various Commands, "Lord, have mercy upon

us ;” deliver us from it as a covenant, because we merit its curses ; “ and incline our hearts to keep this law :” incline us to honour it as the rule of our lives. Here then, both for ourselves and for each other, the grace of God is desired ; the greatest and most glorious blessing, a blessing of which we shall constantly stand in need. The time is fast approaching when we shall not stand in need of any thing we have here below. I shall say, Farewell to the sun, I want thee no longer ; to the moon, Farewell, I want thee no more ; farewell to all things here below : but the grace which God hath bestowed will end in imperishable glory.

2. It involves in it the law of Love : “ *Our Father,*” “ *Our daily bread,*” “ *Our trespasses.*” We should pray for each other invariably ; and may we make a rule of praying for each other as a congregation. As a family of heaven, pray for your minister ; and pray that he may pray for you. We have this treasure in earthen vessels : nevertheless these are the instruments God makes use of to teach you the truths of the Gospel ; and they are better fitted for it than angels : angels might tell you glorious things, but they could not sympathize with you ; angels could not preach to sinners, as they do not stand in need of mercy themselves. But a minister of the Gospel is one inspired with new life by the Almighty ; and then commissioned to proclaim glad tidings to others. God says to His minister, I do not send angels to preach the Gospel ; but I send *thee* whose life I have restored ; *thee* once dead in trespasses and sins : I send *thee* to preach to thy

fellow-sinners : tell them that I have had mercy on *thee*, and thou canst not tell them more of my mercy : throw thy heart into theirs ; enter into the inmost recesses of their bosoms ; meet every enemy, preaching the glories of Immanuel, and tell them that it is his purpose to triumph *in* his family as fully and completely as he has triumphed *for* them.

It is an advantage to a minister to have many afflictions, many trials ; and why, my brethren ? Because then he may tell his hearers not what he has heard, but what he has *felt* and *handled* of the word of God. He may take the truth from his own bosom, and throw it into the bosoms of his congregation. Do not despise the ministers of God ; God will not suffer them to be despised : but do not idolize them : treat them with the respect that is due to them as the ministers of God, whether they possess one or ten talents.

3. We should deprecate the idea of receiving any thing spiritual or temporal but at the hand of God : “Be careful for nothing ; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. iv. 6, 19).

4. Lastly, It involves a prayer for preservation from every evil, more especially from sin, from Satan, and from everlasting death ; and that we may inherit the blessings of the eternal covenant in glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XII.

ON THE SPIRITUALITY OF GOD AND HIS WORSHIP.

JOHN iv. 24.

God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit, and in truth.

THESE words form part of the interesting interview between the Saviour of mankind and the woman of Samaria.

He made himself known to her as the Messiah, or, according to the Greek, as the Christ; and he makes himself known to all his family, in the same character: but we have his truth in our hand, and do not need any interview with him, as man, to teach us who He is, and what we are. As God, he enters into the inmost recesses of our hearts, and by His spirit tells us who and what we are; and presents us with as full and faithful an exhibition of our lives as he presented to the woman of Samaria. "The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me the hour cometh when ye

shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews."

Some of the rays of Divine truth, as appears from the context, had reached even the dark minds of the Samaritans; but salvation was of the Jews. They preserved among them the forms and ceremonies prescribed by God Himself; and though the majority of the nation understood them not; yet the spiritual Jews saw through them, and prized them, as typifying that Christ who was to come as the Saviour of the world.

Jesus said, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship." God not only may be, but is worshipped, wherever there are sincere followers of Him. The Gospel may be preached any where and every where on earth. It has been faithfully preached in a variety of places; and the Spirit of God has set His seal to its truth. The Saviour himself preached on a mountain, and afterwards in a ship; evidently teaching his church in future ages, that the Gospel may be preached wherever individuals can be found to hear it. The expediency of this may in some cases be doubted; but this does not affect the general truth in the least degree. God may now be worshipped any where and every where. Jesus then adds in the words of the text, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

I. The first thing that necessarily claims our con-

sideration is, that *God is a Spirit* : in other words, a rational, immaterial, invisible Being ; emphatically styled in Scripture, “ The Father of Spirits ; ” the Creator and Preserver of all other spirits ; pervading their essence, and, by His mighty energy, preserving them in existence : and He will, according to His promise, continue to preserve them for ever. God is a Spirit ; such a Spirit that He pervades all finite spirits ; a Spirit in every respect infinitely superior to all those who are His offspring.

I would consider God as a Spirit ; first, *negatively*.

All matter, all time, all space, and, by necessary consequence, all imitation and imperfection, are to be banished to an infinite and eternal distance. Nothing but spirit could have existed from eternity. In the light of this important truth, we see the awful error into which some of the ancient philosophers had fallen, who invested matter with the attributes of Deity by making it eternal. Matter eternal ! in the midst of all its changes and decomposition ! Impossible. Every deteriorating change in the creature has an immediate tendency to dissolution, which, were it not for the energy of creative power, would invariably take place. What are we to think of man, even in his best estate, with all the advantages of learning and science, but unenlightened by revelation ? How awfully ignorant of the true God ! He is in this respect, on a level with the most ignorant savage.

The deification of matter is atheism and idolatry in the aggregate. The detail of this idolatry is pre-

sented to us by the ancient philosophers in the worship of fruits, vegetables, and plants ; of gods of gold and silver, wood and stone. Here a truth presents itself to our consideration, *i. e.* the inability of man to see the necessary dependence of the creature, upon the Creator. Without Divine revelation, man could never have understood the nature of his dependence on God, or his duty to Him.

Whatever we find in the worship of different nations, in different ages, is only a corruption of revelation. Some of the rays of Divine truth have evidently travelled, more or less, almost round the habitable globe ; and wherever we discover any thing that approximates, even in the remotest degree, to that which is good, it must be traced to God : while all the ignorance, imperfection, and evil blended with the worship must be ascribed to the creature.

It is equally true, that spiritual evil cannot have existed from eternity. It is an utter absurdity to suppose it. Spiritual evil is a deviation from a given rule. That which exists from eternity is subject to no rule, but lives irrespective of all rule.

God is a Spirit, an infinitely pure Spirit : He has existed from eternity, and will exist to eternity.

I go on to consider the question *positively*.

Necessity presents itself. Independence must involve necessity in it, in the highest degree. Independence must also involve eternity in it ; “ From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.” “ The High and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity.” This is what He says of Himself. Now mark ; to apply my subject

in some measure as I go on, mark the interesting truth that flows from the necessary existence of God. Necessity in its primary and highest sense is connected with good only. I need not dwell on this truth ; I leave it to the reflecting minds of those who hear me. Consider what I have said, and pray for me, that I may ever find the bliss of this life in seeking the welfare of your immortal spirits : while I bless God for having given to such an unworthy worm as I am, one of the most interesting congregations under heaven.

The next thing to be considered is, *Freedom*.

Freedom of volition existing in the highest degree : and this freedom at the same time, paradoxical as it may appear, the child of necessity ; and I could prove (if time permitted) that the most glorious freedom that will ever inhabit the bosom of finite being must also be the offspring of necessity. Volition, flying on the wings of Infinite Wisdom, and Infinite Benevolence ; volition, comprising the good only of the creature, for nothing but good can emanate from the sovereign will of Deity. Here we connect not only necessity but freedom in its highest sense, with good and good only.

If we consider penal evil, I mean the punishment of sin, whether in time or in eternity ; this is to be traced to the necessary perfections of God. Trace then all the good of the creature in life, in death, and for ever, not only to the freedom of His volition, but to the necessity of His nature. How lovely, how infinitely lovely a Being is God. Consider,

again evil in both a moral and penal point of view, and trace it to its source ; to the freedom, the abused freedom, of the creature in its moral ; and to the necessary perfections of the Creator, in its penal character.

In the third place, *Power*.

Infinite power must necessarily be one of the attributes of self-existent independent essence ; this invariably wafts His will to its destiny. How striking the contrast between the Creator and the creature ! To will in God is not at all easier than to do : to do, in Him is as easy as to will. In fact, to will and to do may be considered as synonymous in God ; for what He wills that He certainly must do. Here then essential independent Spirit leaves all finite being at an infinite and eternal distance. It cannot be said of any finite being, It is as easy for him to do as to will. Satan cannot do all he would, or he would bury us in the depths of hell at the present moment. Angels of light cannot do all the good they would : they cannot love and serve God as they would, for they know that more is due to Deity than they can ever present.

But to consider moral and penal evil in their ultimate consequences. The punishment of the wicked has far more of what is negative than of what is positive in it. All blissful communion is withheld, and God exhibits Himself in the terrible glories of His justice. In the light of this truth consider what the Lord says : “ As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.” No : the wicked

are punished in hell quite exclusively of His sovereign will. It is not a matter of choice in Deity, whether the wicked shall be punished or not ; it is not an arbitrary act in Him ; but it is an act of that justice which emanates from His necessary perfections. Deity then is lovely, even if we read His perfections in the light of those flames where “ the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

But contrast this with the bliss of Deity and you will find the positive glories of God. The glory that kindles and keeps alive the flames of hell, kindles and keeps alive the heaven of his people. Not only so ; all the perfections of God that are evinced in visiting His enemies with punishment, shine in infinitely greater splendour in the salvation of His people ; and will for ever fill and pervade all heaven, and constitute the bliss and peace of the heavenly hosts : because Messiah died, and exposed Himself to His Father’s vengeance, that he might for ever close the gates of hell against us ; and open those of heaven to receive and bless us through all eternity. What a triumphant truth is this ! Could we grasp it with the might and in the energy of Divine power (as we soon shall do), our happy spirits would leave their frail frames, and in the twinkling of an eye wing their flight from earth to heaven ; to live in the presence of God for ever and ever.

In the fourth place, *Omniscience* must necessarily be an attribute of that Spirit who is independent. This perfection is presented to us in the most interesting manner in holy writ. The

Lord is a God of knowledge. When the question was put to Peter by Christ, "Lovest thou me?" his answer was, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." All the perfections of God are co-equal and co-existent. But I must now go on, in the fifth place, to consider

His *omnipresence*.

He inhabits all time, all places, and all ages, at one and the same moment. I have quoted His own testimony: "I am the high and the lofty one that inhabiteth eternity." He inhabits not only eternity, but the minutest fraction of a second of time. He not only inhabits infinite space, but pervades the minutest particle of matter. Father, Son, and Spirit present themselves every where; present in infinite space; present in infinite and eternal ages; in each portion of time; in every particle of matter: if this be not the case, how could He be omniscient? True we cannot comprehend this, and we never shall.

6. I proceed now to consider, the *Holiness* of God. This attribute, as comprising the beauty of Deity, is in its exercise necessarily connected with all His other attributes, and consequently affords us the highest consolation and encouragement.

It has been justly said, "Holiness is the beauty of Deity, as power is His life." This holiness consists in an infinite love of order, and an infinite hatred of disorder; in an infinite love of good, and an infinite hatred of evil: and this is the attribute which most immediately presents itself to the consideration of all

His worshippers. “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts.”

Many other things might be taken into consideration ; but I should detain you too long.

II. I go on, therefore, in the second place, to consider the nature of that worship which is due to God. It must be like God. He cannot accept of any thing from His creature, that is not like Himself : it would be infinitely unworthy of His perfections to do so. Thoughtless sinners ! consider this ; and then dream of going to heaven when death snaps the thread of life. The spirit of man was originally created in the image of God, not only intellectually, but spiritually. Purity was one of the attributes of angels in heaven, and afterwards of Adam in paradise.

What is it, then, I would ask, to approach God, and to worship Him, in spirit and in truth ? It is, to revere God above all beings, and above all things. This is to worship God ; and this indeed will be a worship worthy of God. But let not weak believers be discouraged : the most glorious provisions have been made by God, and are given to us in worshipping, and made known to us to encourage us to worship Him here below. The heart of Messiah primarily ascended to His Father and His God. The consideration of himself was always secondary in his bosom. Connect the purity of his humanity with the dignity of his person : bear in mind that all the glory of Deity pervaded all he thought and did as man ; and let it ever be remembered, that in him

we approach the Father. In him, it is worthy of God to say that "He does not despise the day of small things." The least particle of true religion will most assuredly ascend to the throne of God, in the intercession of that Saviour who has died, not only to redeem, but to save us with an everlasting salvation. When angels were called into existence, God was the first object that arrested their attention. When Adam was called into existence, God was the first object that arrested his attention. He found himself, if I may so speak, wholly enveloped in Deity. How pure, how happy, must those beings have been, as they originally came from the hand of their Creator!

"God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

In spirit. The soul, as well as the body, must be prostrate before the Lord; and until the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit changes the heart, this is never the case. But, my brethren, it is now high time that I should ask myself, and you, individually, What sort of worshippers are *we*? Do we apparently give the body to God, and the soul to lying vanities? I would enter the inmost recesses of your hearts, and ask you, How have you been engaged in worshipping God? Has the soul been given to God? Mistake me not; my object is not to be personal, but I must be characteristic. It is the province of a minister to follow his congregation to their families, to their closets, into their hearts; and, appealing to your

consciences individually, in the presence of the living God, I ask you : and how do you answer the question?

In truth—as opposed to all types and shadows, as embracing all the glorious realities typified by the Jewish rites. Every thing was typified under the Jewish dispensation; not only the sacrifice of Christ, but the influence of the Holy Spirit also. In truth—as it is written: “Through him,” that is, Jesus, “we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father;” and nothing short of this is worshipping God in spirit and in truth. In truth—in purity. Purity indeed (we confess to our shame) is not the only inmate within our bosoms at present; but purity does certainly exist in the bosom of every true worshipper, proclaiming war against every thing that is opposed to God; while a sinful principle is ceaselessly engaged in waging war against it. It is a war of extermination: one must die: and, blessed be God, the covenant of Father, Son, and Spirit has doomed the delinquent to perish eternally. The Saviour died that sin might be destroyed and the sinner saved.

But what is it to worship God? The worship of God must involve this in it,—a principle within the human bosom disposing its possessor to honour God as God honours Himself. Nothing less than this is worthy of being called the worship of God. In the light of this truth how awfully destructive is every false religion!

The worship of God involves in it union and communion with God Himself; for a principle that resembles Deity, cannot live but in Deity. After

receiving from the lips, or, if you choose, from the pen, of God himself, His holy word; when the heart is imbued with the truths of the Bible, we find that its glorious doctrines must be true. The nature of things, and the necessities of man, proclaim them true, with a voice louder than ten thousand thunders. When thus filled to its glorious dimensions (if you will allow the term), the human bosom echoes all the truths of Divine revelation, and welcomes God again to His own legitimate temple.

Chemists tell us of affinities—of some things that blend together as if they loved each other (if I may use the expression), while others it is impossible to amalgamate; no skill, no art, can blend them. Now, consider man as the enemy of God: can he be united to God in that state? Impossible. Can he be received into bliss in that state? Impossible. There is an impossibility in Deity, and in the creature also.

Scientific men invariably study the laws of nature; and if they wish the works of art to succeed, and to be transmitted to future ages, they act in consonance with those laws; for in attempting to oppose them they would only meet with disappointment, and in the end destruction. The analogy is similar in spiritual things; and the believer must do the same in seeking the favour and friendship of God, in life, in death, and for ever. The Law, the Gospel, and the perfections of God, must be studied: the soul and all its powers must delightfully flow into these things, or man is undone for ever. To illustrate this truth in another manner: If you find two friends

delighted with the society of each other, you will discover that there is something similar in their dispositions: they may differ from each other in many things, but there is love: there is a principle common to both, that embraces one object, that loves one thing and hates another: they are united and cemented to each other in the bonds of friendship.

I have often told you that the work of the Holy Spirit is very plain and simple, as far as it is requisite for us to discern it; for all the purposes of doctrinal, practical, and experimental religion. It is neither more nor less than this,—to teach man to apply the principles of common sense to the truths of Divine Revelation.

Consider the necessity of spiritual worship: it involves in it the necessity of the regenerating influences and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. What is sin? The abuse of freedom in the creature, directing all the energies of the soul to itself, and, as an awful consequence, excluding the Creator. “God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” Spiritual worship involves in it the freedom of God and of the creature. Man must be taught to use his freedom aright; and this lesson can only be taught by the Spirit of the living God. This necessity is not an arbitrary constitution of things; it is to be traced to the existence of God, and therefore to His necessary perfections. This necessity is likewise proved by all the arguments and with all the eloquence of God Himself. Behold Messiah! The death of an infinite and

eternal Person proves, in the clearest manner, that it is infinitely and eternally inconsistent with the perfections of God to save any human soul without being taught to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Look within then, individually. Look within, thoughtless sinner! and behold in man, the descendant of fallen Adam, an awful contrast to God. His freedom is invariably abused. Connect this with the reiterated remonstrances and protestations of conscience, and you will see that sin is exclusively your own. See then, in the light of this truth, the absolute necessity of Divine interposition to save ruined man; and that in a two-fold point of view,—by an Infinite Sacrifice and by Almighty Power. Grace has been called irresistible. This, as Mr. Newton observes, is not the best term; because grace is, and has been again and again, resisted in the bosoms of the family of God; but it is invincible: as it is written, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.” Here is a new necessity, flowing from the necessity and from the freedom of God Himself, in blessing mankind with His sovereign will, made by His fiat, made by His decree, made by Himself, immutably and eternally one with Christ.

Here a glorious necessity presents itself, the parent of the most delightful freedom, in the bosom of the believer. Once he was the voluntary slave of Satan; but now, renewed in the spirit of his mind, he is become the willing servant of the King of kings.

See, moreover, the awful consequences of man’s wilful apostasy from God. He is in communion with

the father of lies : and there are individuals on earth who avowedly worship the devil ; who are honest, and confess what they are doing : but, indeed, all the enemies of God are in communion with the devil, as our Lord said ; “ Ye are of your father the devil, and his works ye will do.” Man is naturally the worshipper of Satan ; he became his vassal in Eden, and continues so until delivered by the grace of God.

Look at this large metropolis ; and who can forbear weeping over, what I may justly call, the wreck of humanity. See the wickedness that is going on ; and to increase it, how many editors of newspapers are advocating the cause of infidelity, and diffusing their pestilential productions, to an alarming extent, even on this holy day. O professors of religion ! let me beseech you to honour the Sabbath more and more in your families ; let no idol whatever intervene between you and your God : do nothing on this holy day that can be done on any other. A very little consideration would teach us, that, if this day were to be sacrificed as it is in France, we should soon travel back into a state of barbarism ; barbarism of the worst kind, in the midst of science and literature ; which without God hardens the heart more than the barbarity of the uncivilized savage. -

Lastly. Consider this, that true religion invests its possessor with the highest honour. There is nothing in this world to be compared to it. All the pride of learning and the pomp of kings sink into insignificance before it. Visit a peasant in his cottage, who

has nothing, perhaps, but what is absolutely necessary for subsistence : behold in him the image of the living God ; and you see infinitely more glory, than in the pride of universities and in the courts of kings without it. Though destitute of all earthly advantages, it raises its possessor to the highest honour.

The subject is so sublime, so grand, so rich and interesting, that no one but God Himself can do ample justice to it. Could I ascend to heaven this evening, and return after having borrowed the eloquence of saints and angels, it would not suffice. If I held in my hand a telescope so admirably made and adjusted that by its mighty powers I could point out the whole planetary system ; not excepting the most remotely distant worlds that skirt the creation of God ; and as each bright orb passed its focus in rapid succession, could tell you, ‘ *I* was present when *that* flew into existence ; when the stupendous machinery of the heavens first began to describe its ponderous and mighty evolutions, *I* participated in the glorious spectacle ; and when the birth-day song of the morning stars arose, *my ears* bore testimony to its glorious praise ;’ doubtless your surprise and astonishment would be excited. But as a Christian I can tell you more : ‘ I am in union and communion with God : I was present when the creative and mighty energy of His Spirit first called into existence within my bosom His grandest, His sublimest work, even His own spiritual image, compared with which all creation vanishes into nothing.’ Oh the sublimity and simplicity of true religion ! The re-

ligion of Jesus, descending from the bosom of the Father, imparts the life of God to the soul of man; raising it from beneath the feet of all enemies, to survive the wreck of time and the conflagration of the world; to enthrone it with God for ever and ever.

THE END.

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